



[PHOTO PROVIDED]

**Light It Up**  
Arkansas cities, counties and school districts are taking advantage of new financing to save money by going solar. [P10]

**SPOTLIGHT: Infrastructure**



**Executive Q&A With A.J. Gary**

The director of emergency management says businesses need to have plans and to make sure employees know them. [P22]

**The Lists [P13-15]**

**Subcontractors, Highway Projects**

**Whispers [P3]**

**Gross-ery case settled in Alma**



**Water rushes through the levee along the Arkansas River in Dardanelle on May 31.** [YELL COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT VIA AP]



## Whose Levees?

Historic flooding forces re-evaluation of long-neglected system

By Jan Cottingham | [JCottingham@ABPG.com](mailto:JCottingham@ABPG.com)

In the end, what was most surprising was that the levees held up as well as they did.

The historic spring flooding along the Arkansas River unleashed “an inland tsunami,” in state Sen. Jason Rapert’s words.

The flooding caused more than \$100 million in damage in Arkansas and another \$450 million in damage to the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System alone, Gov. Asa Hutchinson told *Arkansas Business* last week. Houses and businesses were destroyed,

farmland inundated, sections of roads and highways washed away. And damage estimates are still being compiled.

Now comes the re-evaluation of Arkansas’ long-neglected levee system, which will surely seek to address at least two big public policy questions: Who

should be responsible for the levees? Who should pay for their maintenance?

Examining the state’s levees will be the job of the 25-member Arkansas Levee Task Force, whose members were

**LEVEES** CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Public-Private Partnerships Making Progress

By Mark Friedman  
[MFriedman@ABPG.com](mailto:MFriedman@ABPG.com)



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THIS STORY WON'T APPEAR ONLINE FOR 7 DAYS

Arkansas is less than a year away from tapping a rich new source of economic development, public-private partnerships that will build and operate public assets like college dormitories or parking decks.

Authorized by a 2017 state law, the partnerships have drawn little notice so far, but

they could yield a gusher of projects, according to legal experts and state development officials.

Public-private partnerships “will increase development and investment in the state,” said Larry Watkins, an adjunct professor, who teaches construction law at the University of

Arkansas at Little Rock’s Bowen School of Law.

He said that state agencies that don’t have money to pay for projects could do so under the public-private partnerships program, known as P3s, which allow for a private firm to finance, design, build and operate a public asset. The state agency will continue to own the asset.

The private company gets the

profits from the project, while taxpayers, at least in theory, will save money because the private company brings experience and efficiency while covering most of the upfront costs.

“If you expand the access to other financing sources, then more projects can be executed,” said Watkins, who also

**PARTNERSHIP** CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Now accepting entries for the 2019 Trendsetter City Program Pg. 23

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# Arkansas Business Whispers

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## Grocery Deal

An Alma wholesaler and discount grocery store operator reached an agreement last week with the federal government in a case that may turn your stomach.

If you recall, last November, the **U.S. Food & Drug Administration** seized more than \$400,000 worth of FDA-regulated products from **J&L Grocery LLC** because they were being stored in insanitary conditions, according to a news release for the FDA.

An FDA inspection last year at the 5.2-acre property found “multiple live and dead rodents, rodent nesting, live racoons, live cats, a dead possum, animal feces, and urine-stained products in and around the company’s seven warehouses and sheds used to store food, medical products and cosmetics,” the release said.

We’re going to spare you the photo exhibits. You’re welcome.

J&L had several buildings on the

property and most of those were used for its wholesale business, said its attorney, **J. Dalton Person** of the law firm **Jones Jackson Moll McGinnis & Stocks** of Fort Smith.

J&L also operated a deep discount grocery store, but none of the FDA’s allegations involved that operation, J&L’s court filings said.

Person said J&L, which is owned by **James T. White** and managed by **Lori A. Layne**, decided to close the store at the end of June.

J&L agreed to destroy the items seized about nine months ago. The consent decree ends a forfeiture complaint filed by federal prosecutors in U.S. District Court in Fort Smith.

“Once they destroy all the goods, ... they’re going to move forward and do something that does not involve FDA-regulated goods,” Person said.

He said they might open another liq-

WHISPERS CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



A classic View-Master brought faraway places into our homes with hand-held images.

## Lunar Reflection

The 50th anniversary of landing a man on the moon turned our thoughts back to the 1960s. It was a simpler time when mutually assured destruction provided comfort during the Cold War.

Clicking through early childhood memories, the decade was a mixture of bottle rockets, Saturn rockets and intercontinental ballistic missiles.

A particular image on our **View-Master** reel of time drew a lingering gaze. A very young boy is sitting on the front steps of his small-town, Arkansas home with his mom one summer evening. They are serenaded

by the oscillating drone of cicadas while contemplating the Space Race.

Pointing to the heavens and the earth’s nightlight, the child asks: “Is that where they are shooting rockets?” “Yes,” his mother confirmed.

After pondering the consequences of firing missiles at the moon, he blurts out a disturbing observation: “Don’t they know they’ll blow it up?”

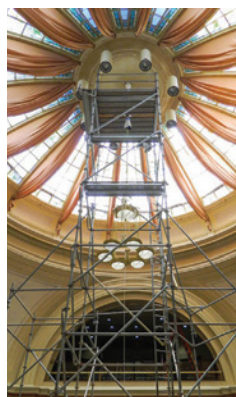
He was relieved to learn that the lunar missiles would be carrying a different payload than their nuclear-warhead-toting brethren.

The moon would be spared from target practice. ■

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WHISPERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

liquidation facility and probably call it **J&L Liquidators**.

"But I don't think that name is certain yet," Person said.

### Big Deals

A 484,932-SF distribution facility in Maumelle, a 54-room motel in North Little Rock, 80 acres in Benton, a 3,889-SF home in Little Rock, a 2,952-SF eatery in southwest Little Rock and a 19-unit apartment complex in Conway combine for this week's six-pack of million-dollar real estate transactions in central Arkansas.

► **Glen Una Holdings Little Rock LLC** of Los Gatos, California, bought the 104 Champs Blvd. project in Maumelle for \$20.7 million.

Seller: **RCS-Little Rock LLC**, an affiliate of **Real Capital Solutions** of Louisville, Colorado.

► **D&D In North Little Rock Inc.**, led by **Umesh Patel**, sold the **Super 8 Motel** at 3925 McCain Park Drive for \$2.3 million.

Buyer? **Balaji Hotels LLC**, led by **Anilaben Patel**.

► The **Benton School District** purchased undeveloped land for a future campus at the southeast corner of Mountain View Road and Davis Street for \$1.5 million.

Seller? **Exit 114 Properties LLC**, led by **Kenneth Martin**.

► The **Cynthia Ann Hubach Trust** sold a home in Little Rock's Edgehill neighborhood for \$1.5 million to **Dora Flesher**.

► **Los Gallos Taqueria Inc.**, led by **Sergio** and **Javier Atilano**, acquired the former **Hardee's** at 8703 Geyer Springs Road in southwest Little Rock for \$1.2 million.

Seller: **CJK Apartments LLC**, led by **Chris Kelleher**.

► **Tyler Garden Apartments LLC**, led by **Melissa Longing**, sold its namesake project at 1839 Tyler St. in Conway for \$1 million. Buyer? **JTM Properties LLC**, led by **Jason Jones**, **Trent Furr** and **Mary Lou Furr**.

### Where the Yellow Went

You may have read in *Whispers* last week that the state's new medical marijuana market has mango and lemon flavored gummies, but to the eye they might as well be blueberry.

"ABC said no to the mango and lemon colors," said **Robert Lercher** of **Bold Team LLC** in Cotton Plant, which is making about 5,400 gummies a day with a retail price of about \$5 apiece.

The lemon and mango gummies, like their original grape siblings, will remain a deep blue.

The company's **ediBold** gummies have been a hot seller at the state's few open dispensaries, but the state wor-

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ried that yellow and orange colors might tempt children. Under the law, all marijuana products must be sold in child-resistant containers.

The **Medical Marijuana Commission's** rules "prohibit edibles in the form of a brownie, candy or cookie, but dispensaries may offer products that do not fall within these categories as long as they do not in any way appeal to children," said **Scott Hardin** of the **Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration**, which oversees enforcement through its **Alcoholic Beverage Control** division.

"Regarding gummies, we've encouraged the use of muted colors to ensure it does not resemble any commercially available children's product."

Bold Team's marijuana vape pens hit the market last week. "We are sold out... just like the gummies when they first hit the market," Lercher reported Thursday, adding that production of the vape line will also increase soon.

"Currently we're waiting for distillate being tested at Steep Hill to fill more pens." **Steep Hill Arkansas** is a potency and purity testing company in west Little Rock.

The state's other operating cannabis cultivators — **Osage Creek Cultivation** in Berryville and **Natural State Medicinals** in White Hall — are working to produce gummies, but none have hit the market yet.

The state's operating dispensaries are **Doctor's Orders** and **Green Springs Medical** in Hot Springs, **Arkansas Natural Products** in Clinton, **Greenlight Dispensary** in Helena, **Native Green Wellness** in Hensley and **Fiddler's Green** in Mountain View.

## Chancellor Hotel, Take 2

Two previous owners of **The Chancellor Hotel** in Fayetteville are fighting on two fronts.

Earlier this month, *Whispers* reported on a lawsuit filed in Washington County Circuit Court related to the December

2018 sale of **The Chancellor Hotel** in Fayetteville.

The short version is that **Ike Thrash** and his sons of **The Thrash Group** in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, sold their 60% ownership share of the hotel in January 2018 to **Darryl Schulte** of Louisville after negotiating with **AJ Capital Partners** of Chicago. Part of the agreement to sell to Schulte, the lawsuit claimed, was that Schulte wouldn't sell to AJ Capital in "the immediate future."

Schulte then sold the hotel to AJ Capital less than one year later. AJ Capital paid \$31 million for the hotel and plans to convert it to a **Graduate Hotel** this fall.

The Thrashes claim Schulte violated their agreement and owes them \$1.5 mil-

lion — what they consider their share of the profit from the flip. The Thrashes also accused Schulte, whose company manages 150-plus hotels in 23 states, of mismanaging the Thrashes' other hotels, including one in Fort Smith.

A spokesman for **Schulte Hospitality Group** sent *Whispers* this statement:

"We are aware of the retaliatory lawsuit filed against us and the other defendants in Arkansas concerning The Chancellor Hotel. Simply stated, the allegations in the complaint are unfounded and untrue.

"The complaint is filled with inaccuracies and mis-statements, including the failure to mention that this is part of a larger dispute that is already the sub-

ject of litigation we commenced in Kentucky. We will work with legal counsel to vigorously defend against the Arkansas lawsuit in every respect."

Schulte, it turns out, had already sued The Thrash Group in Louisville in mid-May for firing his management company without the proper 60-day notice.

Schulte's management company had agreements with at least six of Thrash's hotels across the country, including the **DoubleTree by Hilton** in Fort Smith. ■



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## Defense



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## Lockheed in Camden Gets \$492M Launcher Contract

**Lockheed Martin**, a mainstay of South Arkansas' defense industry, will be building missile launchers and hardware in East Camden under a half-billion contract to supply the **U.S. Army** and **Marines**, as well as the militaries of **Poland** and **Romania**.

The components are for HIMARS, the **High Mobility Artillery Rocket System**.

Lockheed Martin's sprawling Camden operation, the **Precision Fires Center of Excellence**, will produce the HIMARS vehicles from the ground up, according to a company news release. The contract, worth \$492,108,514, calls for the launchers to be completed by 2022.

"Lockheed Martin is very pleased that Poland has procured its first HIMARS launchers," **Gaylia Campbell**, a Lockheed

Martin vice president, said in a statement. She said the new launchers "provide unparalleled mobile firepower to light and early entry forces, and our allies can count on Lockheed Martin's ongoing support in maintaining these combat-proven capabilities."

HIMARS launchers are lightweight and can be transported by a C-130 and larger aircraft for rapid deployment, the company said. The system consists of a launcher loader module and fire control systems mounted on a five-ton truck chassis. Three crew members operate it from a specialized armored cab.

Lockheed Martin, based in Bethesda, Maryland, employs about 700 workers in the Camden area.

— *Kyle Massey*

## Nonprofits

### Sklar Will Retire After 27 Years At Arkansas ACLU

The executive director of the **American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas** is retiring after nearly three decades heading the group.

The ACLU of Arkansas last week announced the retirement of **Rita Sklar**, who has served as the organization's

executive director since 1992. The group said **Holly Dickson**, its legal director, will serve as interim director, and a national search will be announced soon.

Sklar has headed the group while it took on several high-profile legal fights, including contesting abortion restrictions that were blocked by a federal judge in 2017. The group also successfully sued to overturn a law voters approved in 2008 aimed at banning gay couples from fostering or adopting children.

— *The Associated Press*

## Infrastructure Spending

### Public Outlays Decline

Total public spending on infrastructure in the United States fell by \$9.9 billion from 2007 to 2017, according to a May report by the Brookings Institution.

"While federal, state, and local governments have spent nominally more on infrastructure in recent years, the rising cost of materials has reduced their real spending power," the report said. "As a result, real infrastructure spending nationally has fallen over the past decade, from \$450.4 billion in 2007 to

\$440.5 billion in 2017."

The report noted that real spending in 2009 and 2010 surged after the one-time stimulus of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, passed as a response to the Great Recession.

However, "this bump was short lived, and spending levels have increased only marginally over the last five years — even as many states and localities have improved their fiscal health since the Great Recession." ■

### United States Public Infrastructure Spending (in billions of 2017 dollars)

2007 to 2017



Source: Brookings Institution

## Education

### UA Researchers Are Awarded \$4.6M Grant for Cybersecurity

A multidisciplinary team of researchers at the **University of Arkansas** has been awarded a five-year \$4.63 million **National Science Foundation** grant to recruit, educate and train cybersecurity professionals.

There is a national shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals.

According to a news release, the **Cyber-Centric Multidisciplinary Security Workforce Development** program will provide the knowledge and tools necessary to protect network and computer systems in three industries: cybersecurity, transportation security and critical infrastructure security, including the electrical power grid.

"The federal agencies that support these industries — all critical to our nation's security and economic health — understand that new cybersecurity challenges are met with an increasingly insufficient security workforce," said **Jia Di**, professor of computer science and computer engineering and principal investigator for the program. "But people at these agencies also understand that our university, with its specific research strengths, is uniquely positioned to expand the pool of highly skilled pro-



Dr. Jia Di



fessionals who can address these challenges."

The program will feature faculty research expertise in computer science and computer engineering, electrical engineering and industrial engineering.

It will provide job training and research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students, and all students will be offered internships at government agencies, where additional training could lead to job placement.

The program will also focus on attracting students from underrepresented populations and will partner with **Northwest Arkansas Community College** to open paths for its students to pursue bachelor and advanced degrees at the university.

— *Arkansas Business Staff*



Billboard

# Outdoor Ad Giant Lamar Buys NWA's Ashby Street

Put it on a billboard: **Jim Matalone** is ready for his shot with the **Atlanta Braves**.

Until this week, Matalone was CEO of **Ashby Street Outdoor Holdings LLC** in Fayetteville, owner of nearly 2,000 outdoor advertising displays in Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri. Now he's a free agent: **Lamar Advertising Co.**, the publicly traded billboard giant based in Baton Rouge, has acquired privately held Ashby Street in a deal of undisclosed terms. So what's next for Matalone? "I kiddingly told somebody that I started in Atlanta, and I'm going to see if the Braves need a 58-year-old prospect who can't

play," Matalone said.

His real plans are to travel with his wife and enjoy empty-nesting; a daughter is enrolled at the **University of Arkansas**.

**Tinicum Capital Partners II LP** of New York and affiliated investors were majority owners of Ashby Street before the acquisition, Matalone said.

"We went through a process of potential bids, but the one by Lamar was most attractive, and they were the most likely suitor," Matalone said he started his outdoor advertising career straight out of college, and had been in the business a quarter-century when he formed Ashby Street in 2011.

His first job was with **Turner Outdoor**, which was on Ashby Street in Atlanta.

After starting Ashby Street Outdoor, Matalone's first acquisition was about 400 billboards from **Fowler Media**.

"From there we expanded over the years, and in 2016 we acquired **Clear Channel's** assets [1,326 billboards included] in the Fort Smith area and Wichita, Kansas."

The company, which prides itself on digital innovation, operates 91 LED displays with fully automated content management.

Ashby Street's 38-employee team, including 26 in Arkansas, will stay put, and clients will see little or no change, Matalone said. "We were absolutely pleased with the terms; it was a good transaction for both sides," he said.

Ashby Street's financial adviser in the transaction was **Moelis & Co.** of New York. — *Kyle Massey*

Technology & Telecom

# Rural Arkansas Gets Extra \$7M For Web Access

The federal government says it will allocate an additional \$7 million in funding over the next 10 years to expand internet access in rural areas of Arkansas.



The **Federal Communications Commission** announced last week that the funds will provide broadband access to nearly

4,000 more rural Arkansas homes and businesses.

In May and June, the FCC authorized a total of \$40.8 million in funding. About 15,000 more rural Arkansas homes and businesses will be connected to the internet when the project is complete.

The FCC says it will authorize more funding in the coming months. Providers will begin receiving money from the FCC this month.

In May, Gov. **Asa Hutchinson** released a plan to expand access to high-speed broadband communities with more than 500 residents by 2020.

— *The Associated Press*

Retail

# Confirmation, Finally, of Trader Joe's in Little Rock

A building permit issued last week by the city of Little Rock is the long-awaited confirmation that specialty supermarket **Trader Joe's** will be coming to the former **Toys 'R Us** space at 11500 Financial Center Parkway.

The news was first reported in May by the local food blog **Rock City Eats**.

The permit, which anticipates build-out work valued at just over \$1 million, was pulled by **Dago Barajas** of Arcadia, California, and comments by the city plans examiner, **Curtis Richey**, specify that the new tenant will be "Trader Joe."

**Stephanie Jackson**, a spokeswoman for Little Rock Mayor **Frank Scott**, issued

the following statement:

"A grocer as wildly popular as Trader Joe's deciding to locate in our city would be great news all around.

"If and when it happens, Mayor Scott will be happy to welcome them to Little Rock."

— *Gwen Moritz*



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# Levees: Flooding forces a new look at old structures in Arkansas

Continued From Page One

announced by the governor earlier this month. In addition, Hutchinson will ask the Legislature to appropriate \$10 million from a reserve fund to pay for repairs to levees damaged by the flooding.

Scientists say that a warming world means ever-heavier rainfall events and, in turn, increasing flooding, an example of which was on display just last week, when remnants of a tropical storm system drenched south Arkansas. Dierks (Howard County) received 16.17 inches of rain in 24 hours.

If Arkansas' future includes more rain and more flooding, then ensuring that the state's flood-control infrastructure can protect its citizens and their property becomes even more important.

Asked whether the Levee Task Force would take into consideration scientific consensus on the changing climate, Hutchinson, speaking in an interview in his office, said: "I certainly want the Task Force to follow science."

He added: "If scientists say that we're going to have increased flooding in the future or increased levels of rain that we haven't had before, then we need to take that into account in our future planning."

## 'It Just Kept Raining'

The National Weather Service warned on May 22 that the floods were coming. Heavy rains had filled rivers, flood risk-reduction reservoirs and lakes throughout the central portion of the United States, essentially the Arkansas River drainage basin. "It just kept raining," said Jay Townsend, a spokesman for the Little Rock District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

To ease pressure on the lakes' dams, the Corps began releasing water, which flowed into the Arkansas River.

In Fort Smith, which saw some of the worst damage, the Arkansas River crested at 40.79 feet on June 1, a record and more than 2 feet over its previous record of 38.10 feet, set in 1945.

The water wasn't just high; it was powerful. The normal rate of flow for the Arkansas River is 40,000 to 50,000 cubic feet per second. The Corps issues a small-craft advisory when flows reach 70,000 cubic feet per second. At their peak during the flood, Arkansas River flows reached 600,000 cubic feet per second.

"It surpasses all Arkansas River flooding in our recorded history," Hutchinson said May 29 at a press conference. "That should be enough to get everybody's attention."

In Yell County, which experienced the



only full failure of a levee, "the Corps kept raising our elevation expectations," Yell County Judge Mark Thone said. "It seemed like every day it was raised another 6 inches or a foot, and we realized then that we were in a serious situation."

On May 22, Thone had declared the situation an impending disaster, which enabled the county and the city of Dardanelle to tap into the resources of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management and the National Guard. They obtained a sandbag machine, and members of the community began filling and deploying sandbags.

But the water kept coming. About 12:30 a.m. Friday, May 31, Thone said, the water "started eating out a groove" in the Dardanelle Levee, and he knew the levee couldn't survive. The area had already been evacuated but Thone told his road crew checking on the levee to get out. Thousands of acres, mainly farmland, and about 10 homes were flooded.

Now, in mid-July, the Arkansas River remains high, but "things are kind of back to normal except the levee is not there now," Thone said. "Of course, the highway's gone too," he said, referring to a portion of state Highway 155.

## Legislation Seeks to Help

The river threatened and overtopped other levees; however, with the exception of the Dardanelle Levee, they didn't completely fail. One of those levees over-

topped by the Arkansas River is in Perry County, where in late May Rapert shot dramatic video, posted on Facebook, as the waters inched higher and higher.

Rapert, R-Conway, has had some hard experience with that levee, part of the Perry County Levee District No. 1 system, which was overtopped by floodwaters in 2015 and 2016 as well, flooding his property along with that of others near Bigelow. That experience has made him something of a legislative expert on the myriad problems facing the levee system in Arkansas, and he was named to the Levee Task Force.

The Perry County levee also was breached in 1990, Rapert noted, and wasn't fully repaired, leading to its overtopping in 2015 and 2016. "It had never had the proper repair and maintenance, and that was what was causing some of the problems that the community has experienced over the last several years," he said.

"It was only after the '16 flood, and the legislation that we passed — which allowed for those boards to be reconstituted and have those new members be appointed — did they have the ability to get back together to even fix the levee."

And this is the heart of the problem with the levee system in Arkansas: The levees are old — the average age is 67 — and neglected, and in many cases, if not most, the boards that once oversaw them are defunct. In addition, a system patched together over decades means

that even determining the number of levees in Arkansas is difficult.

A 2009 legislative audit report noted that the state's levee system arose in the aftermath of the catastrophic Mississippi Valley Flood of 1927, which killed an estimated 1,000 people, left thousands homeless and inundated more than 2 million acres of Arkansas farmland.

But the levee districts that formed were created by "various acts of the General Assembly, county ordinances, and circuit court orders," the report said, and the passage of time has created "uncertainty as to which laws govern which levee districts. As a result, Arkansas is served by a patchwork of district and privately owned levees with no central oversight of the flood control structures."

Rapert's legislation in 2016 sought to address some of these issues. He shepherded through a bill that gave county judges the power to appoint members to inactive levee boards and required county clerks to send annual levee district reports to the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission.

However, despite the requirement, of about 90 known levees that should have active boards, only about 20 have submitted reports.

A \$489,250 grant from the Natural Resources Commission went to repair the Perry County levee, but this year's floodwaters were too much for it. It was overtopped, again flooding property and leading to the 12-day closure of a por-





**Arkansas Land Commissioner Tommy Land, in sunglasses, and Yell County Judge Mark Thone, in blue shirt, assess the damage along the Arkansas River near Dardanelle after the levee failed in the early morning of May 31, flooding thousands of acres of farmland. Dr. Robert Graybill's farm shop, middle photo below, was just a few hundred feet from where the levee was breached.**

[PHOTOS BY KAREN E. SEGRAVE]



tion of state Highway 60, "which was an extreme disruption for the community and also a safety hazard," Rapert said.

### Who Pays?

Inseparable from the issue of who's responsible for the state's levees is the question of who should pay to maintain them or repair them when they're damaged.

"That's something we're hoping can be addressed with the new Levee Task Force," said Thone, the Yell County judge.

The Dardanelle Levee was built in the late 1940s, Thone said, and the board occasionally had meetings, "but they didn't have any money, so I guess you could say they were inactive."

Asked whether the board had ever assessed levee fees on area landowners, Thone thinks that "maybe generations ago there were — I'm not sure — but they never collected them or quit collecting them or something. You know, all those people are dead and gone."

But asked who should pay for levee upkeep, Thone is clear: "There's no way the locals can. There's not enough people and not enough money. There's going to have to be some federal assistance. There's going to have to be. You're talking hundreds of thousands of dollars and there's no way eight or 10 guys — monetarily, this can't be done."

"But, you know, everybody's going to have to have some skin in the game, as

they say." He thinks levee maintenance will require both federal and state funding.

Thone is hopeful that the Task Force can create a uniform set of standards that levee districts will be required to meet. Like Rapert, Thone is a member of the Levee Task Force.

In Arkansas, there are three kinds of levees: those in a federal levee program, overseen by the Corps of Engineers; those in a local district but not part of the federal levee program (like the Dardanelle Levee); and private levees, neither in a federal program nor a local levee district.

The 2009 legislative audit report focused on the latter two kinds of levees. The boards of local levee districts comprise "property holders within the protected area of the structure. The districts' sole responsibility is to the property owners within their district. State and local government officials have no oversight or control over the maintenance and operating status of the districts' flood control structures."

And when local district levees or private levees that are not meeting Corps of Engineers standards are damaged, they're not eligible for federal funding for repairs. That leaves local communities and the state on the hook.

Townsend, of the Corps of Engineers, said there are 15 inactive levee boards along the Arkansas River alone. No maintenance is being done on those levees and they're not being held to a "minimally acceptable standard by the Army Corps of Engineers, and they're not in a federal program where we can assist them if there was some sort of failure after a flood," he said.

Rapert said that looking at the situation "from a 50,000-foot level, what happens in a crisis event — ultimately, no matter what level of protection has been done locally — they turn to the state and the federal government for help. That has always happened."

That means, he said, that the Levee Task Force needs to examine whether the state has "a vested interest in making sure that those levees that are protecting critical infrastructure are absolutely maintained and doing their job. Because it ends up costing the state and all taxpayers more to handle a crisis situation, where there's tremendous loss of property and maybe even life, than there is to actually make sure that there's funding to help maintain some of those areas."

Rapert said, "We've lived for decades with this patchwork levee system, and then we periodically have a real crisis — and in this case, a flood unlike what we've seen probably since 1927. That means that everyone in positions of authority at the state and local levels now need to work together to ensure that we are much better prepared in the future."

"Because it will happen again. It's not a matter of if; it's a matter of when." ■

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# Counties and Cities Get Their Day in the Sun

Solar power savings fund infrastructure, deferred maintenance

By Kyle Massey

KMassey@ABPG.com

“Do you like money?”

“Are you interested in saving a lot of it?”

That’s Rick Vance’s simple pitch to towns, counties, agencies and schools freed by a new law to partner with third-party companies in solar energy projects.

Vance is regional director for Entegrity Energy Partners LLC of Little Rock, one of several Arkansas solar providers riding the wave as local governments, agencies and schools plunge into a new solar mainstream. (See list.)

With utility savings from solar arrays and energy performance contracting, non-taxed entities are “making improvements, doing deferred maintenance and even using some for big capital projects,” Vance said.

“Solar is now the cheapest way to buy electricity. “A combination of the new law [Act 464 of 2019], tax advantages and other factors mean this is the best time” to act, he said, “with no upfront capital costs and guaranteed savings. Why would you not do this?”

Vendors like Scenic Hill Solar and Seal Solar of North Little Rock and Today’s Power Inc. of Little Rock are all building multiple government and school arrays this year.

“Interest in solar by governmental and educational entities has really escalated,” said Michael Henderson, president of Today’s Power. He said changes in law and tax incentives add up to a good bottom line.

## Attractive Savings

“Today, solar is available for almost anyone for under 6 cents per kilowatt-hour, and for larger systems well under 5 cents. These savings are very attractive for budget-strained governmental entities.”

The average Arkansas retail electricity price is 10 cents per kilowatt-hour, according to June data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

County solar projects are either built or underway in Washington, Phillips and



This solar power array by Scenic Hill Solar powers Clarksville Connected Utilities, the Johnson County city’s municipal utility. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

## Arkansas Solar Projects for Public Entities

Cities/Counties	Capacity	Status	Contractor/Operators
Washington County	2 MW	Under construction	Seal Solar and LightWave Solar (via Energy Performance Contracting with Johnson Controls, which contracted out the solar work)
Phillips County	400kW	Under construction	Entegrity
Jefferson County	176 kW	Completed	Seal Solar and LightWave Solar (via EPC contract with Johnson Controls)
City of Helena-West Helena	520 kW	Under development	Entegrity
City of Fayetteville	10 MW solar, 12 MW/24 MWh storage	Under construction	Today’s Power Inc.
Clarksville Connected Utilities	6.5 MW 2.86 MW expansion	Completed in 2018	Scenic Hill Solar Announced in May 2019
City of Stuttgart	3.1 MW	Announced July 16	Scenic Hill Solar
City of Paris		Breaking ground summer 2019	Today’s Power Inc.
City of Camden/Ouachita County	6.5 MW	Pending final approval	Scenic Hill Solar
Pulaski County		Request for proposals	
City of Russellville		Request for proposals	
City of Conway		Request for proposals	
Central Arkansas Water		Request for proposals	
City of Walnut Ridge		In discussion	Entegrity
<b>State Agencies, College and Universities</b>			
Department of Correction	300kW	Completed	Entegrity
Arkansas Community Correction	360 kW	Completed	Entegrity
Arkansas State University-Newport	740 kW	Completed	Lightwave Solar (via EPC contract with Johnson Controls)
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	321.1 kW	Completed	Performance Services
Southern Arkansas University Tech	1.4 MW	Under construction	Today’s Power
<b>Public School Districts</b>			
Batesville	750 kW	Completed	Entegrity
Buffalo Island	766 kW	Under development	Stone Creek Solar
Guy-Perkins	585 kW	Design stage	Scenic Hill Solar
<b>Other:</b>			
Arkansas National Guard, Camp Robinson	360 kW	Completed	Entegrity

Source: Arkansas Advanced Energy Association

Jefferson counties; cities joining the parade include Fayetteville, Clarksville, Helena-West Helena and Stuttgart, which announced

a collaboration with Scenic Hill just last week. The Walnut Ridge City Council is considering a project with Entegrity, which is

also working with Searcy Water Utilities on a solar panel system approved Tuesday by the utility’s board.

Today’s Power will break ground on a solar plant for the city of Paris (Logan County) this summer, the company revealed exclusively to *Arkansas Business* last week. It is already building Fayetteville’s city system, featuring 10 megawatts of solar production and up to 24 megawatts of battery storage, on 87 acres at the town’s two water treatment plants. Ozarks Electric Cooperative is another partner in those arrays. Scenic Hill is planning a 6.5-megawatt plant for Ouachita County and its seat, Camden.

Katie Niebaum, executive director of the Arkansas Advanced Energy Association, said solar’s cost advantages let local leaders “free up precious resources, many times for critical items that have been delayed due to budget restraints. Moreover, solar projects provide jobs and serve as an economic multiplier in the communities where they are developed.”

## Pulaski County Seeks Bids

Pulaski County Attorney Adam Fogleman sees vast potential in solar coupled with energy performance contracting, which optimizes energy savings by refitting buildings with LED lighting and efficient HVAC and control systems. “It isn’t just an environmental approach; it’s also a finance approach that gave us a budget-neutral strategy to address 10-plus years of deferred maintenance for county facilities.”

The county requested bids from solar vendors, hoping to shave \$250,000-\$325,000 from its million-dollar annual electric bill. Central Arkansas Water and the cities of Russellville and Conway have also issued requests for solar proposals.

Fogleman is seeking a deal to provide 80-100% of the power gobbled by Pulaski County’s 40-odd buildings. A committee to weigh proposals will begin forming within weeks.

“With the incentives available to the private developer, the price I’d anticipate would save the county between 25% and 35%,” he said. The savings would be a general revenue windfall, allowing the Quorum Court to decide how to redirect the cash. “That could mean expanding services, or addressing deferred maintenance needs, or helping with all the services the county



provides. Savings derived from a solar service agreement would give the county much-needed flexibility without causing the budget to go up.”

A 30% federal solar investment tax credit is also fueling sun fever, but it will start to fall after this year, to 26% for 2020, 22% in 2021, and so on, said Vance of Entegriety. “At 26% next year, it will still be a bargain, but not quite as good a deal.”

### ‘Forward-Leaning’

Scenic Hill CEO and former Arkansas Lt. Gov. Bill Halter agreed. “This is a very good time to act, because folks who can move quickly will achieve the benefit of a higher tax credit. These are forward-leaning projects for communities and counties. The municipal project in Stuttgart will provide 100% renewable energy for city operations, save citizens tax dollars, lock in lower energy prices for 30 years or more, and contribute to economic development, all while improving the environment. It’s a four-part win for government and citizens.”

Pulaski, the first county to take advantage of EPC con-



**Entegriety of Little Rock handled a county-wide energy performance contract with Pulaski County, including putting new efficient HVAC units in courthouses like this one in Little Rock. The \$5.2 million project is saving taxpayers \$445,792 a year, officials said.**

[PHOTO PROVIDED]

tracting, previously turned to Entegriety for a \$5 million efficiency project calculated to save \$446,000 a year. Fogleman called third-party solar the logical next step.

While Pulaski County’s ven-

dor will own and operate the solar plant, Washington County took a different approach, said Dwight Gonzalez, director of county buildings and grounds. “We wanted to own the array, to own everything, and per-

formance-based contracting let us do that. All the savings in our project have to be guaranteed.”

The energy performance contractor is Johnson Controls, an Irish multinational with headquarters on Colonel Glenn Road in Little Rock, and it selected Seal and LightWave as solar installation contractors.

“If we are guaranteed, say, \$500,000 in savings and that falls \$50,000 short, the county will get a \$50,000 check to cover the difference,” Gonzalez said. “We’re going to be the largest county-owned solar producer in the state. With that, LED lighting, water conservation and other measures, we’ll be able to take care of some deferred work,” including replacing 88 HVAC units around the county.

“I don’t have to go to the Quorum Court for this money,” Gonzalez said. “We get it by spinning back the meter, and using money that would have gone to the electric bill. We call it capital cost avoidance.”

The state’s EPC system was initiated by law in 2013, developed by industry leaders and financial professionals in 2014 and expanded to municipalities

and counties in 2015, according to the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

Heather Nelson, president and co-founder of Seal Solar, which rebranded itself from Seal Energy Solutions this year to emphasize its tightened focus, noted that before starting the Washington County project, her company completed the current largest county-owned solar system in Jefferson County.

“Savings from solar directly impact every taxpayer in those areas,” she said. “Jefferson was the first county in Arkansas to both install and operate commercial-grade solar. There are a lot of ways to fund solar today,

but for government entities performance contracting is a great financial vehicle, with little to no cash out.” Nelson urged businesses

and governments to view energy spending holistically. “It has always been an expense line, but now it is an opportunity to invest in technology that will save money for decades.” ■



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“If you expand the access to other financing sources, then more projects can be executed. There’s no doubt that we need more projects.”

[LARRY WATKINS, ATTORNEY, MITCHELL WILLIAMS LAW FIRM]

[PHOTO BY KAREN E. SEGRAVE]

## Public-Private: Development path opens up

Continued From Page One

is an attorney at the Mitchell Williams law firm in Little Rock and a board member of the Associated General Contractors of Arkansas.

“There’s no doubt that we need more projects.”

The Arkansas Economic Development Commission hired the consulting firm KPMG in February to develop rules for the P3s, said Amy Fecher, secretary of the state’s Department of Transformation & Shared Services, which is now overseeing the P3 program. (The Transformation & Efficiencies Act moved the P3 program from ADEC to the Division of Building Authority within the Department of Transformation & Shared Services.)

KPMG is gathering information and working on the P3 rules, Fecher said in an email response to questions from *Arkansas Business*.

Once completed, the rules then will have to go through a 30-day public comment period, followed by a legislative review process.

“We anticipate being ready for projects in early to mid-year of 2020,” Fecher wrote.

The delay in creating the regulations didn’t surprise Lisa Washington, the executive director of Design-Build Institute of America based in Washington.

P3s “are pretty complex arrangements that one just can’t jump into without a more detailed understanding,” she said. “So I can certainly under-

stand why it’s taken some time for [Arkansas] to get started with one.”

Arkansas’ P3 legislation, which is more than 20 pages, includes numerous checks and balances that require reviews by lawyers and accountants.

Forty states now have legislation allowing some form of P3 authority, Washington said.

“We do have a huge infrastructure challenge in our nation and Washington really

hasn’t done anything to address that challenge,” she said. “Our aging infrastructure needs to be corrected.”

But Watkins said P3s aren’t a “silver bullet for solving our infrastructure problems, but it’s definitely a source of fixing part of the problem.”

In the meantime, Watkins and others will continue to spread the word about P3s. Watkins spent the last two years educating the public about them.

He said there’s also a lot of misconception with P3s, including people thinking that it is “some kind of private takeover of public assets, and it’s just not true.”

### Legislation

Former State Rep. Warwick Sabin, D-Little Rock, tried unsuccessfully to pass bills allowing state agencies to use P3s in Arkansas in 2013 and 2015. His legislation passed in 2017, but applies only to state agency procurements and exempts the Arkansas Department of Transportation. The bill left out of P3s for county and city projects.

“The reason I brought the bill up in the first place, back in 2013, was that obviously we have more infrastructure needs in Arkansas than the public sector can afford,” Sabin told *Arkansas Business* in 2017.

“It’s not just highways. It’s all kinds of infrastructure at the municipal and the state level, whether you’re talking about water systems and sewer systems or college campus and school buildings,” Sabin added. “We have a lot of needs, and we would never be able to afford to cover them all through government funding.”

ARDOT has its own authority to do P3 projects, and municipalities could do their own P3s under a municipal water statute and, if structured as a P3,

the energy savings performance contract statute, Watkins said. (For more information about the energy savings statute, see Page 10.)

State Sen. Mathew Pitsch, R-Fort Smith, told *Arkansas Business* last week that he thinks transportation projects will be amended to be in the P3 legislation.

“P3s can be various different things,” he said. “When most people think of P3s, they’re thinking of toll roads, but it can do a private-public partnership with building a port, building an airport, building railroad interchanges.”

The P3 statute is “very broad in what it allows,” said Will Gruber, vice president of government relations & strategic partnerships at the global public affairs firm inVeritas of Little Rock.

“There have been a lot of road projects around the country and around the world,” said Gruber, who has followed the P3 legislation in Arkansas.

He said in Maryland, a county courthouse construction project was done using a P3.

### Not for All Projects

Not all the projects will work for a P3, however. The public asset being built with a P3 has to have a revenue stream, said Jerry Holder, director of transportation at Garver of North Little Rock, the engineering, architectural, planning, and environmental services firm. He also was a speaker in a Design-Build Institute of America webinar last year called making the most of P3s in Arkansas.

Holder said if a project doesn’t generate a rate of return of more than 10% “then it’s not worth the risk.”

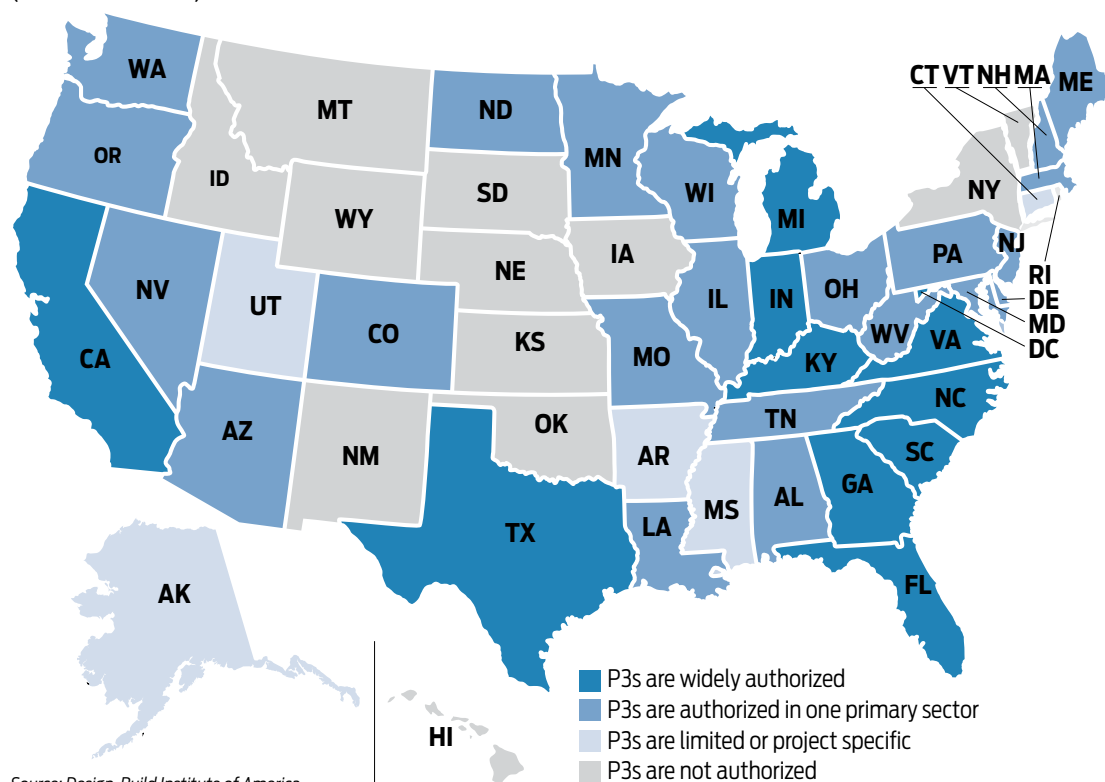
Holder also said some P3 projects have ended in bankruptcy. SH 130 Concession Co. built a toll road in Austin, Texas, in the late 2000s. But the number of cars the company projected didn’t materialize, resulting in it filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization in 2016. SH 130 Concession listed \$1.2 billion in assets and \$1.6 billion in debts.

Still, Watkins, the attorney, said in the two years he’s been talking about P3s, there has been a lot of interest from both the state agencies and contractors, developers and investors in doing a P3 in Arkansas.

“Once we have this program up and rolling, ... I believe you’ll see some P3 projects take off,” he said. ■

### Overview of P3 Authorization by State

(as of October 2016)





# Largest Electrical Subcontractors

Ranked by revenue for 2018

	Company Address Phone, Fax Website, Email	2018 Electrical Revenue 2017 Revenue	Electrical Employees	Top Executive(s)	Sample Projects
1	<b>Koontz Electric Co. Inc.</b> 1223 E. Broadway, Morrilton 72110 (501) 354-2526, (501) 354-2580 www.KoontzElectric.com, Mark@KoontzElectric.com	\$48.6 \$49.8	182	Benny M. Koontz President	Memphis I-40 Bridge lighting, Bull Shoals Dam breaker replacement, Entergy substations, Denison (Texas) Power Plant transformers
2	<b>Multi-Craft Contractors Inc.</b> 2300 N. Lowell Road, Springdale 72764 (479) 751-4330, (479) 751-4399 www.Multi-Craft.net, Info@Multi-Craft.net	\$43.2 \$48.0	238	Rick Barrows President	Tyson Foods Inc., Springdale; University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Kraft Foods, Fort Smith; Northwest Arkansas Community College, Bentonville
3	<b>Gigerich Electrical Inc.</b> 4669 Malvern Road, Hot Springs 71901 (501) 262-5550, (501) 262-5551 www.Gigerich.net, DGigerich@Gigerich.net	\$17.5 \$16.1	145	Don Gigerich President Scott Brown VP	Hot Springs Housing Authority, Hot Springs Junior Academy, Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort, National Park College Student Center, CHI St. Vincent labor/delivery, Hot Springs; U.S. Marshall Museum, Ft. Smith, Saracen Casino Resort, UAMS South Central Campus, Pine Bluff; Islander Resort, Islamorada, FL; Haywood Hotel, El Dorado; Malvern High School
4	<b>Nabco Mechanical &amp; Electrical Inc.</b> 1750 Amity Road, Conway 72032 (501) 327-1337, (501) 327-8227 www.Nabco.com, CBrand@Nabco.com	\$15.1 \$14.3	97	Chris Brand President	Southwest Little Rock High School, Sylvan Hills High School, St. Bernards Hospital
5	<b>Innovative Power Solutions LLC</b> 4101 Richards Road, North Little Rock 72117 (501) 851-9990, (501) 851-9985 www.InnPower.com, JRice@InnPower.com	\$13.0 \$14.0	90	Joe Rice President Dean Wallace VP of Sales	Eastern New Mexico University, Drew County Hospital remodel, Crossett High School, MacArthur Military Museum, FedEx Ground, Bentonville
6	<b>RGB Mechanical Contractors Inc.</b> 4221 E. Johnson Ave., Jonesboro 72403 (870) 972-8360, (870) 933-7492 www.RGBMechanical.com, GregB@RGBMechanical.com	\$6.0 \$6.0	45	Greg Brasher President Blake Brasher VP	First National Bank at Hilltop, Arkansas Continued Care Hospital, St. Bernards Emergency Department expansion, St. Bernards HeartCare Center

Sources: The companies. Other companies believed to be large enough for the list failed to respond to repeated requests for information.

Researched by Roxanne Jones

# Largest Mechanical Subcontractors

Ranked by revenue for 2018 in millions

	Company Address Phone, Fax Website, Email	2018 Mechanical Revenue 2017 Revenue	Mechanical Employees	Top Executive(s)	Sample Projects
1	<b>Multi-Craft Contractors Inc.</b> 2300 N. Lowell Road, Springdale 72764 (479) 751-4330, (479) 751-4399 www.Multi-Craft.net, Info@Multi-Craft.net	\$89.0 \$79.0	311	Rick Barrows President	Carroll Electric, Berryville; EcoVista, Tontitown; Bentonville High School
2	<b>Comfort Systems USA (Arkansas) Inc.</b> 4806 Rixey Road, North Little Rock 72117 (501) 834-3320, (501) 834-5416 www.ComfortSystemsUSA.com, Clyde@ComfortAR.com	\$56.2 \$52.5	210	Clyde A. Jester President	Drew Memorial Hospital, Our Pharma, St. Vincent CHI North, Bismarck High School HVAC, Helena High School, Parris Tower plumbing, Arkansas Specialty Orthopedics, Jacksonville High School, Arkansas Arts Academy, Bentonville School, Arkansas Department of Corrections, Dermott and Brickeys
3	<b>Nabco Mechanical &amp; Electrical Inc.</b> 1750 Amity Road, Conway 72032 (501) 327-1337, (501) 327-8227 www.Nabco.com, CBrand@Nabco.com	\$22.7 \$16.4	105	Chris Brand President	Southwest Little Rock High School, Sylvan Hills High School, St. Bernards Hospital
4	<b>RGB Mechanical Contractors Inc.</b> 4221 E. Johnson Ave., Jonesboro 72403 (870) 972-8360, (870) 933-7492 www.RGBMechanical.com, GregB@RGBMechanical.com	\$20.0 \$18.1	80	Greg Brasher President Blake Brasher VP	First National Bank at Hilltop, Lawrence County jail, Manila school, Arkansas Continued Care Hospital, Jonesboro CWL HVAC replacement
5	<b>Mountain Mechanical Contractors Inc.</b> 903 S. School Ave., Fayetteville 72701 (479) 521-4886, (479) 521-9022 www.MountainMech.com, Info@MountainMech.com	\$16.2 \$11.7	52	Chris Harvey President	JB Hunt Training & Technology Center, Rogers-Garrett Elementary School, Walmart Project Maple-DC, Helen R. Walton Children's Enrichment Center, Gentry Intermediate School, Pinnacle Foods expansion
6	<b>Malone's Mechanical Inc.</b> 2221 Oliver Springs Way, Van Buren 72956 (479) 474-8094, (479) 474-5760 www.MalonesMechanical.com, Mike@MalonesMechanical.com	\$14.3 \$5.6	65	Michael Duane Malone President	Sparks Hospital, University of Arkansas, Fort Smith
7	<b>Daniell Air &amp; Electric</b> 102B Trooper Drive, Hot Springs 71913 (501) 767-4977, (501) 767-2099 www.DaniellAir.com, Info@DaniellAir.com	\$3.7 \$4.1	30	Herbie Daniell President Jason Daniell VP	HVAC for commercial and industrial sectors

Sources: The companies. Other companies believed to be large enough for the list failed to respond to repeated requests for information.

Researched by Roxanne Jones



# Largest Highway Construction Projects

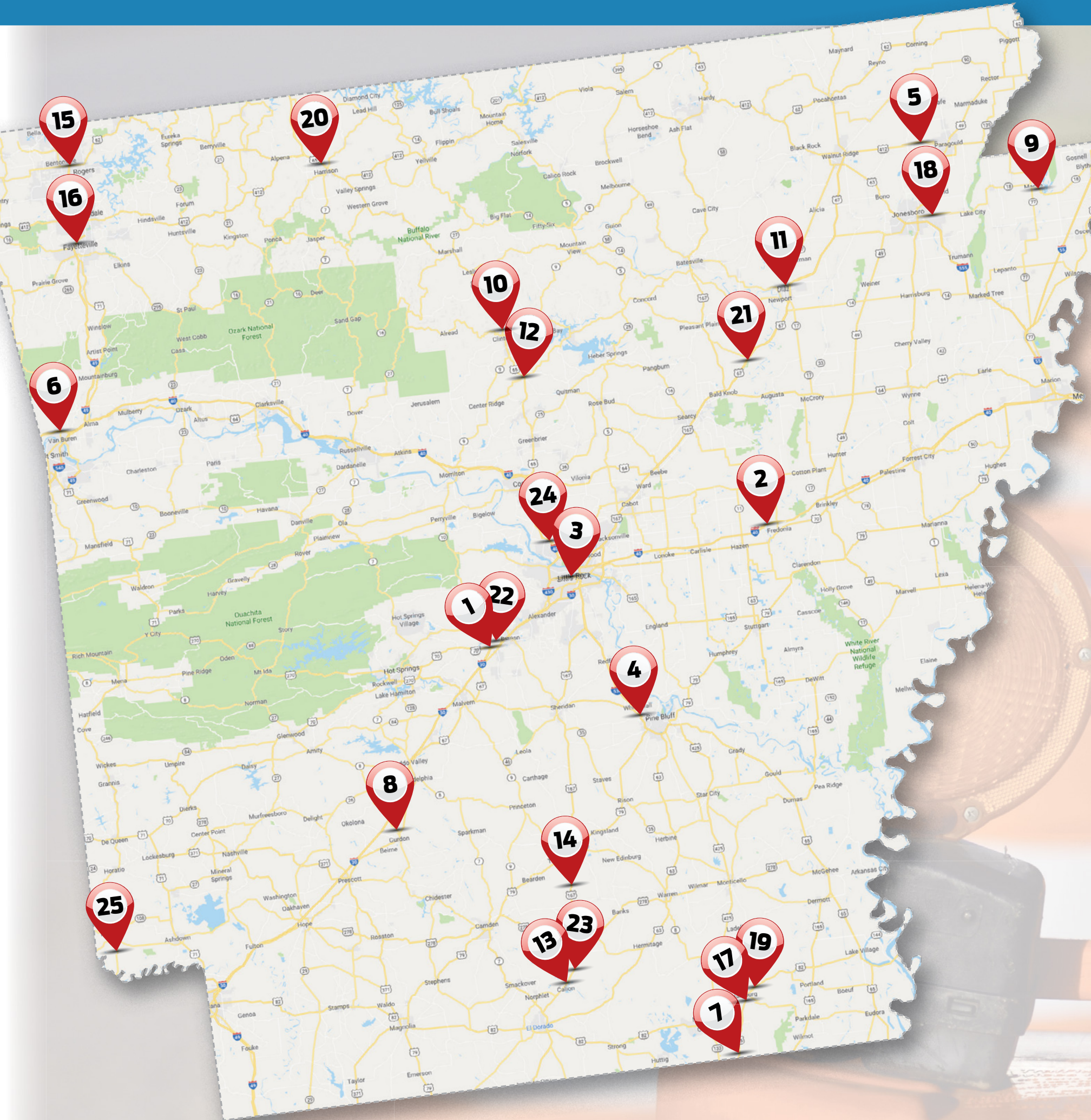
Projects currently under construction ranked by dollar value of contract

	Project Route, County	Award Amount Award Date Est. Completion	Contractor	Description
1	Highway 70/Sevier Street Widening Interstate 30, Saline	\$187,339,930 12/12/2018 Late 2022	Johnson Bros. Corp., A Southland Co. Roanoke, Texas	Widen 5.402 miles of I-30 to six lanes, reconstruct three interchanges, and replace five bridge structures
2	New White River Bridge and Approaches Interstate 40, Prairie	\$100,559,843 11/4/2016 Mid 2020	Parsons Corp. Pasadena, CA C.J. Mahan Construction Co. Columbus, OH	Replace the White River Bridge and construct roadway approaches on 1.209 miles of I-40
3	Interstate 630 Widening Interstate 630, Pulaski	\$87,384,772 4/9/2018 Early 2020	Manhattan Road & Bridge Co. Tulsa	Widen 2.16 miles of I-630 from Baptist Health Medical Center to University Avenue in Little Rock
4	Highway 65B/Highway 65 Interstate 530, Jefferson	\$67,232,300 7/28/2017 Late 2019	Webber LLC The Woodlands, Texas	Reconstruct 10.350 miles of I-530 in Pine Bluff
5	Highway 67/Highway 141 Widening Highway 412, Greene and Lawrence	\$58,516,744 1/23/2019 Mid 2022	Atlas Asphalt Inc. Jonesboro Delta Asphalt of Arkansas Inc. Paragould	Widen 14.298 miles of Highway 412
6	Oklahoma State Line/East Interstates 40 & 540 Interstates 40 and 540, Crawford and Sebastian	\$53,245,517 10/29/2018 Mid 2020	APAC-Central Inc. Fayetteville	Mill and inlay the main lanes and perform bridge rehabilitation on I-40 and I-540
7	Louisiana State Line/Highway 82 Widening Highway 425, Ashley and Morehouse Parish, LA	\$44,594,956 9/19/2018 Early 2021	Diamond B Construction Co. LLC Alexandria, LA	Widen 9.977 miles of Highway 425
8	Highway 299/Gurdon Rest Area Interstate 30, Clark, Hempstead and Nevada	\$39,017,513 9/19/2018 Mid 2020	Redstone Construction Group Inc. Little Rock	Mill and inlay for 19.312 miles on I-30
9	Highway 18 Widening Highway 18, Mississippi	\$35,471,090 11/4/2016 Mid 2020	W.G. Yates & Sons Construction Co. Philadelphia, MS	Widen 1.799 miles of Highway 18 East at Manila from two lanes to five lanes
10	Highway 110 Widening Highway 65, Van Buren	\$33,984,383 1/23/2019 Mid 2021	Bobby Kennedy Construction Co. Quitman	Widen Highway 65
11	New White River Bridge Highway 367, Jackson	\$31,361,490 10/30/2013 Late 2020	Tanner Construction Co. Inc. Laurel, MS	Construct 0.908 mile of Highway 367 roadway and a new White River Bridge at Newport
12	Bee Branch North Highway 65, Van Buren	\$30,870,727 11/20/2017 Late 2019	White River Materials Inc. Batesville	Widen Highway 65 to five lanes
13	New Ouachita River Bridge Structures and Approaches Highway 167, Calhoun and Union	\$29,442,371 11/5/2014 Early 2020	W.G. Yates & Sons Construction Co. Philadelphia, MS	Construct a new bridge over the Ouachita River on Highway 167
14	Highway 274-North Widening Highway 167, Calhoun	\$28,964,147 2/26/2018 Mid 2020	D&J Construction Co. LLC West Monroe, LA	Widen 7.102 miles of Highway 167
15	Highway 71/County Road 34 Additional Lanes Highway 549, Benton	\$27,505,531 11/17/2017 Late 2020	Dave Kolb Grading LLC St. Charles, MO	Construct 8.745 miles of Highway 549
16	Highway 71B Interchange Improvements Interstate 49, Benton	\$26,897,563 7/30/2018 Mid 2020	APAC-Central Inc. Fayetteville	Replace the I-49 overpass approaches to a single point urban interchange system at the Highway 71B intersection, install new signals at the ramps, Moberly Lane, and North 46th Street, and widen Highway 71B from four lanes to six lanes
17	Highway 425-Hamburg Widening Highway 82, Ashley	\$26,704,205 9/19/2018 Early 2020	JB James Construction LLC Baton Rouge, LA	Widen 5.372 miles of Highway 82
18	BNSF Railroad Overpass (Jonesboro) Highway 18, Craighead	\$25,182,889 10/29/2018 Early 2022	Capital Paving and Construction LLC Jefferson City, MO	Provide an overpass of the Highway 18 BNSF Railroad Crossing in Jonesboro
19	County Road 411/Highway 425 Highway 82, Ashley	\$24,690,884 11/4/2016 Early 2020	Johnsville Co. LLC Hermitage	Widen 5.33 miles of Highway 82 from two lanes to five lanes
20	Maxie Camp Road/Highway 206 Widening Highway 65, Boone	\$22,942,316 9/6/2017 Early 2020	Nabholz Construction Corp. Conway	Widen 4.373 miles of Highway 65
21	Bald Knob/Newport Highway 67, White	\$18,692,510 12/12/2018 Late 2021	Chester Bross Construction Co. Palmyra, MO	Rehabilitate 27.320 miles on Highway 67
22	Alcoa Road/Highway 183 Highway 5, Saline	\$17,394,676 9/19/2018 Late 2020	Redstone Construction Group Inc. Little Rock	Widen 2.269 miles on Highway 5
23	Bangs Slough/Highway 172 Highway 167, Calhoun	\$16,969,845 6/22/2016 Early 2020	W.G. Yates & Sons Construction Co. Philadelphia, MS	Widen 3.911 miles of Highway 167 to four 12-inch lanes with an 11-inch painted median and 8-inch shoulders
24	Interstate 40 Interchange (Maumelle) Interstate 40, Pulaski	\$14,578,036 10/29/2018 Late 2019	McGeorge Contracting Co. Inc. Sweet Home	Construct four interchange ramps and notch and widen Counts Massie Road and I-40 interchange in Maumelle
25	Little River Structure and Approaches Highway 41, Little River and Sevier	\$13,965,915 3/23/2016 Mid 2019	Jensen Construction Co. Des Moines	Replace the bridge over Little River and construct roadway approaches on Highway 41

Source: Arkansas Department of Transportation

Researched by Marty Cook and Gwen Moritz







# Judging a Clean Line Book By Its Hero and Antagonist

If you think history is written by the victors, consider the counterintuitive case of **Michael Skelly** and **Clean Line Partners**.

A new book by **Russell Gold**, senior energy reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, makes Skelly its hero. A champion of wind power, Skelly dominates “**Superpower: One Man’s Quest to Transform American Energy**.”

The bid by his Houston-based company to build a huge transmission line for solar and wind power across mid-America is cast as visionary and environmentally heroic, a \$2.5 billion project torpedoed by not-in-my-backyard critics, fossil fuel last-standers and politics.

As reviewer **Trey Shipp** put it, Skelly is the “driven entrepreneur with a huge goal: building thousands of miles of transmission lines to carry cheap, renewable energy across several states to where it’s needed. ... Raising money was the easy part. Convincing landowners, state governments and utility commissions” would be Skelly’s test.

And ultimately his failure.

The book’s view of American electric power since **Thomas Edison**’s time fascinated Arkansan **Julie Morton**, a prime critic of Clean Line’s **Plains & Eastern** project, which would have cut across Oklahoma and Arkansas, carrying western wind power to the **Tennessee Valley Authority**.

But to her, Skelly’s no hero and Clean Line was never a good idea.

“I didn’t object to how I was presented in the book,” Morton told *Arkansas Business*. “The opposition was all about the land [and landowners’ right to challenge eminent domain]. But I do have trouble with the second half, and I’m not even sure it should be called nonfiction.”

The author fell victim to what Morton calls the “Skelly spin,” in which Clean Line’s representatives are kind and caring, eager to help landowners, she said. “They must have been Jekyll and Hyde, because they were actually condescending Ivy Leaguers who thought they were the smartest people in the room.”

*Arkansas Business* won “best scoop” at the **Alliance of Area Business Journals’** annual awards last month in Atlanta for its report on Clean Line’s demise, coverage that Gold said he had followed. The Plains & Eastern Line faced early opposition by the **Arkansas Public Service Commission** and years of withering fire from Arkansans in Congress. All six opposed the project, which a University of Arkansas study said would bring \$600 million to Arkansas’ economy. Wary landowners in the transmission line’s path also sued, contesting the project’s eminent domain powers.

“So many people in our grassroots movement called legislators,” Morton said. “So many that they asked us to stop calling. That made a difference, and our



## Outtakes Kyle Massey

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delegation made a difference. They’re made into villains in the book, but actually, for once, they listened to the people, not the billionaires, and did their job.”

The project was scrapped after the TVA rejected buying the wind power, but that was just the last nail among many blows, including the rise of President **Donald Trump**. The Obama White House had promoted renewable energy, but Trump’s team doggedly backs coal and petroleum, and it came as no shock that the **U.S. Department of Energy** reversed its support for Clean Line last year.

“It wasn’t really about being green,” Morton said. “It was all about money, and Skelly admitted as much to Mr. Gold.”

Gold, who also wrote “**The Boom**,” an invaluable look at the rise of fracking, told *Arkansas Business* that “Superpower” has done well, but “it’s an odd time to publish a book. There’s a lot to be outraged about in there, but it is so hard to compete with other daily outrages that riffle through Twitter and our national discourse.”

He said Clean Line’s final offer to the TVA, at \$18.50 per megawatt-hour, was “an unbelievable low price.” The agency is now seeking proposals for wind power at \$40 per megawatt-hour. “Why would they be seeking wind right now at \$40 when they rejected it at half that price years ago?”

Gold sees bigger lessons in a warming world. “We need to figure out how to streamline the bureaucracy and build infrastructure” to create jobs, combat climate change and generate lower-cost energy.

Morton, 67, has a different takeaway. “I told Mr. Gold that this outdated technology, lines on 20-story-tall steel towers, is no longer viable.” She champions the approach of **SOO Green Renewable Rail**, which plans to ship Midwest wind energy to Eastern markets via underground transmission lines buried along existing railroad tracks. “This would cut out permitting issues and give you just one owner to deal with, and you wouldn’t be putting huge towers across 8,000 acres of our beautiful state.” ■

## DAILY ONLINE NEWS

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### Most Read Stories of the Week

Here are the most popular online stories for the week ending July 18.

All stories listed below are available for free this week at [ArkansasBusiness.com](http://ArkansasBusiness.com):

#### 1. Confirmation, Finally, of Trader Joe’s in Little Rock

Specialty supermarket will be coming to the former Toys ‘R Us space at 11500 Financial Center Parkway.

#### 2. Judge Rules Rivendell Destroyed Evidence in Overdose Case

Estate of former patient who died in her former nurse’s apartment won’t have to prove liability.

#### 3. ‘Moneyball For Law Firms’ (Gwen Moritz Editor’s Note)

Moritz looks at Malcolm Gladwell’s theory that the timed LSAT penalizes people who think deeply.

#### 4. Signature Move Takes Stock Public

CEO Gary Head discusses bank’s momentous launch through its comeback after recession meltdown.



#### 5. Dromborg Castle Off Auction Block, Still For Sale

The 8,825-SF, multistory Fayetteville property is now listed for sale by owner at \$4.9 million.

“We did not receive acceptable pre-auction offers, and we had a place where we could cancel going forward, so that’s what we did.”

— JOAN JOHNSON, who owns Dromborg Castle with her husband, Bruce.



### Appetite for Construction

Be among the first to see the real deals and big loans of Arkansas development in our twice-a-week Construction e-newsletter. Look for it every Tuesday and Thursday, once you subscribe for free at [ArkansasBusiness.com/ConstructionNews](http://ArkansasBusiness.com/ConstructionNews).



# Dry County Brewpubs Now On the Menu

Several Arkansas communities appear poised to take advantage of a little-noticed act passed in the most recent legislative session, **Act 681 of 2019**, creating a private club permit for microbrewery-restaurants in dry counties.

The idea had been percolating for a while, said state Rep. **Spencer Hawks**, R-Conway, one of the measure's sponsors. "The median age in Conway is somewhere around 30," Hawks said. "And a lot of folks that I've talked to said, 'Why don't we have microbreweries in Conway?'"

Of course, one reason is that Conway is in Faulkner County, a "dry" county, and alcohol sales there were permitted only in private clubs — until Act 681.

The **Conway Area Chamber of Commerce** also was strongly behind the idea, Hawks said, working to help get the bill passed.

The measure is fairly narrow in scope. The microbrewery-restaurants can't produce more than 45,000 barrels of beer per year, they have to be both a microbrewery and a restaurant serving complete meals, they have to meet the state's definition of a private club, they must have a seating capacity of at least 50, and they can't sell beer for off-premises consumption, like growlers.

"Because they're a newer model of business in Arkansas, I think they were overlooked, and I think communities like Conway were missing some economic development opportunities," Hawks said. "And that's really the reason I wanted to do what I did is just to allow more entrepreneurs and communities to act like the entrepreneurs that they are."

And now **Rebel Kettle**, which opened in east Little Rock in 2016, is planning to locate a brewpub in Conway, said co-owner **Jason Polk**. He was hoping to close on the building at 1090 Spencer St. in downtown Conway, part of the original Smith Ford building, by the end of this month.

Rebel Kettle also will be brewing beer at the Conway location. "At some point, we feel like that is going to become our primary brewing location," Polk said.

Rebel Kettle is working with **Dan Fowler of Cromwell Architects Engineers** on the design for the 5,000-SF property. Polk said it will have an outdoor space and will have some "commonalities" with Rebel Kettle in Little Rock, like a similar menu, but will have its own vibe.

(As an aside, Polk said that Rebel Kettle, which produced about 1,000 bar-



## Restaurants Jan Cottingham

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rels last year, has a goal of producing 3,000 this year.)

Meanwhile, in Fairfield Bay, which resides in both Van Buren and Cleburne counties, Mayor **Paul Wellenberger** sees a microbrewery-restaurant as having "great potential" in his city, a resort community on the north shore of Greers Ferry Lake.

"We are growing, bursting at the seams with conferences and tourism and we just opened up a brand new 63-room hotel," he said, referring to **Cobblestone Inn & Suites**. "Because of the tourists, a microbrewery, I think, would be a great fit for Fairfield Bay. It would help us continue on our revitalization of our city."

No potential brewpub has contacted the community, but city officials have reached out to the **Arkansas Brewers Guild**, notifying it of Fairfield Bay's interest in being home to a microbrewery-restaurant.

"We had 30,000 visitors last year, 10 major events, 15,000 attending events and conferences at our conference center," the mayor said, referring to the **Fairfield Bay Conference Center**. "This

year we opened up a new hotel. ... We have great tourism trade. We are a great location for someone to put in a microbrewery. We would love to have one. We would be very welcoming."

Fairfield Bay hosted three conferences in June. "All three of those rebooked," Wellenberger said. "Two of those rebooked for the next three years.

We've already got 22 conferences booked out in 2021."

Hawks, the state legislator, said that microbreweries allow "a person, not just to create that restaurant scene, but to create a product that could be brought to a greater market. You talk about Fairfield Bay or Conway, what it's like to have a community create something and then be able to find it on a shelf somewhere in another part of Arkansas or even another part of the country — I look forward to having at some point a **'Toadsuck Brew'** or a **'Pickles Gap Brew'**, just because it's Conway." ■



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[PAUL WELLENBERGER,  
MAYOR, FAIRFIELD BAY]

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# Futuristic Thinking

## EDITORIAL

A lot of depressing stuff is happening in our world and in our country, in our companies and even in our families. It's overwhelming and exhausting because things that are going wrong suck up the time and energy that we would all prefer to spend on positive, hopeful, forward-looking projects.

That's why last week's roundtable discussion hosted by the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission was so encouraging. The topic of discussion was the impact of "short-termism" on capital markets and whether the SEC, a regulator of publicly traded companies, should change its reporting requirements in response. Streamed live on the internet, it was a cordial, collegial, data-driven discussion of what Larry Fink, CEO of uberinvestor BlackRock, has called "quarterly earnings hysteria."

There was clear consensus that short-term thinking that suffocates long-range planning and investment is a real problem recognized by the vast majority of public company executives, if no consensus yet on ways the SEC could improve the reporting environ-



Arkansas Business' Opinion Page

ment. It seems safe to say that there are segments of the investing industry that profit from frequent injections of data and would not want to give that up, even if most companies and the economy in general would be healthier if long-term planning and goals were rewarded like short-term earnings gimmicks and stock-buybacks. (As we've often noted, every regulation is a business opportunity for someone.)

Short-termism is not, of course, peculiar to publicly traded companies. The picture on the front page of this issue shows the dramatic result of neglected infrastructure — although, to be fair, May's floods might have overwhelmed even a well-maintained levee. This issue is full of infrastructure stories, and there is a common theme: how to pay for things that everyone wants when no one wants to pay. Someone somewhere is going to invest in the future and reap the benefits. It will be even more depressing if Arkansas is left on the sidelines. ■

# Flagging Disrespect

I believe in the economic boycott as a perfectly legitimate, free-market tool for encouraging different corporate behavior. It sometimes even works, although there seem to be a lot more calls for boycotts than subsequent victory celebrations.

A few weeks back, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, reacted to a business decision by Nike by announcing that he was giving up his lifelong patronage of the sportswear company. The hashtag #boycottnike trended on Twitter for a few days. Most astonishing to me, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey ordered his state's economic development agency to withdraw financial incentives that had been offered as an inducement for Nike to locate a \$185 million plant in a Phoenix suburb. The plant was expected to employ 505 people and pay average wages of nearly \$50,000 a year.

What was the business decision that was worth potentially alienating a development worth almost \$25 million in payroll every year? You know what it was. Nike had begun shipping a shoe with the original 13-star U.S. flag embroidered on the heel but was talked out of the idea by Colin Kaepernick, the football player Nike hired as a spokesman last summer after his kneeling protest during the national anthem made him a political lightning rod — and unemployed.

Kaepernick, who is African American, persuaded Nike that the "Betsy Ross" flag had been co-opted by some white supremacists as a nostalgic symbol of the good ol' days when black people were slaves. (This was news to me, but I don't seek out white supremacist progaganda.)

Because this is 2019, outrage was immediate and widespread. It seems there are quite a few Americans who were deeply offended that Nike had decided not to profit from what they consider a patriotic symbol, even if it offended others. The calls to boycott Nike surprised me; if I had given it much thought, I would have figured that Ted Cruz and the like-minded had written off Nike as soon as Kaepernick signed on.

Apparently not. Gov. Ducey was photographed wearing Nike sneakers on the Fourth of July — two days after announcing that Arizonans "don't need to suck up to companies that consciously denigrate our nation's history." And Sen. Cruz identified himself as a Nike customer until July 2, months after Kaepernick was hired.

I've never been as drawn to symbols as I am to ideas, but I understand that symbols can be very powerful. So it surprised me less that Nike withdrew the flag sneakers than that the idea was ever greenlighted in the first place. I remember that my sons had some T-shirts deco-



## Editor's Note Gwen Moritz

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rated with flag motifs when they were small, but their involvement in the Boy Scouts exposed me to the U.S. Flag Code and made me much more sensitive to proper flag protocol. For instance, the code says, "The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery," and "No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform."

The entire protest seemed entirely emotion-driven. Do we demand that all companies commercialize patriotic symbols or face boycott? Or do we reserve that for companies that change their minds after consulting with a trusted (and wildly successful) endorser who has his finger on the pulse of the customer base? And should government officials inject their opinions into legal marketing decisions by private companies when any harm would be limited to shareholders? Nike's decision not to sell the Air Max 1 USA hardly compares with Boeing's decision to make safety equipment an added-price option on the 737 Max.

Nike seems to know its business. After its stock price dropped by a few cents on the day that the recall of the Betsy Ross shoes was announced, it was up by more than 4% as of Wednesday's close.

\*\*\*

When Nike confirmed that it was still going to build in Arizona, Gov. Ducey tweeted out a message of welcome. The city of Goodyear is making good on the tax incentives it offered Nike, but Ducey has not reinstated the \$1 million the state planned to hand out.

I find that to be the best part of the resolution: The taxpayers of Arizona aren't having to give money to a company that is clearly willing to come without it.

\*\*\*

Someday maybe Americans will be as outraged by the marketing strategies of the opioid manufacturers as they are about sneakers.

Email Gwen Moritz, editor of Arkansas Business and mother of two Eagle Scouts, at GMoritz@ABPG.com.

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# Infrastructure Tools in Government's Kit

Many articles have examined the highway funding discussions of the 2019 legislative session. If 2020 general-election voters approve a measure to continue levying a one-half percent sales tax, cities and counties could receive more than \$100 million annually for road funding based on measures passed during the 92nd General Assembly. These funds will improve transportation statewide, but local governments may also address other deferred infrastructure needs.

Let's highlight three outside-the-box options local governments could use to supplement existing funding and increased state spending for highways and roads, as well as a financing mechanism that's not currently available to local governments but could be helpful if the law were amended.

## Vehicle Tax/Revenue Bonds

A vehicle tax and associated bond issuance may be available to local governments to fund infrastructure, particularly the maintenance, construction and rebuilding of streets. Two different statutory regimes let local governments vote on levying a privilege tax up to \$5 per vehicle for operating motor vehicles on public roads and highways.

If Title 26 of the Arkansas Code is used, cities must use some of the funds



## Commentary William A. Gruber

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raised for local parks or outdoor recreation, or to operate a public transit system. If Title 14 of the Code is used, some proceeds must be used to pay city law enforcement and firefighters.

If revenue bonds are used, then special obligation bonds with interest up to 4.5% per annum can be issued. A county in a regional mobility authority may impose two motor vehicle taxes.

## Regional Mobility Authority

A single county or contiguous counties and/or cities can form a transportation agency through a regional mobility authority. An RMA transportation system includes streets and bicycle paths

and allows local governments to better partner with the Arkansas Department of Transportation on projects, supplementing state and federal dollars. RMAs are financed through local sales or motor vehicle taxes. Bonds can be issued for RMAs, as well as state rollback funds. A revolving loan fund can also be created.

## Improvement Districts

Various improvement districts are authorized for financing Arkansas infrastructure projects like road and bridge construction, maintenance and repair.

Municipal improvement districts (MIDs), suburban improvement districts (SIDs), property owners' improvement districts (POIDs) and rural road improvement districts (RRIDs) each offer unique advantages. Each improvement district has rules governing the formation and regulation of each type of district. In general, each improvement district is authorized to assess real property within its boundaries and use the funds for the benefit of the district. In addition, these improvement districts can issue bonds.

## Public-Private Partnerships

All these mechanisms could be effective as local governments and individuals address infrastructure needs. However, one tool not currently available could be very useful — public-private

partnerships (P3s).

The Partnership for Public Facilities & Infrastructure Act (P3 Act) is another option for projects that serve the public. Examples include mass transit facilities, bridges, roads, etc. Under current law, only state agencies (excluding ARDOT), boards and commissions can contract with a private entity for a P3.

While some jurisdictions have had negative experiences with P3s, others have seen significant benefits. A governmental entity must remain vigilant, ensuring it and its constituents are aware of both the rewards and risks associated with partnering with a for-profit entity on infrastructure projects.

During the 2021 legislative session, the P3 Act could be amended to allow local governments to use P3s for infrastructure projects, including transportation-related projects.

One or more of these mechanisms could be an effective tool for local governments and their citizens to uncover additional funding for infrastructure improvement projects.

While some are available now, others may require additional work at the next legislative session. ■

*William A. Gruber is vice president of government relations and strategic partnerships for InVeritas, which has offices in Little Rock, Rogers and Washington. Email him at WGruber@InVeritasInfo.com.*



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## Legal Notices

### PROBATE NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF LONOKE COUNTY, ARKANSAS

PROBATE DIVISION  
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF GILBERT EARL JOHNSON, DECEASED No. 43PR-19-229

NOTICE OF SMALL ESTATE  
NAME OF DECEDENT: GILBERT EARL JOHNSON  
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS: 1501 Lincoln, St., Lonoke, AR 72806  
DATE OF DEATH: APRIL 29, 2019

On June 21, 2019, an affidavit for collection of small estate by distributee was filed with respect to the estate of GILBERT EARL JOHNSON, deceased, with the clerk of the probate division of the circuit court of LONOKE County, Arkansas, under Ark. Code Ann. § 28-41-101.

All persons having claims against the estate must exhibit them, properly verified, to the distributee or his or her attorney within three (3) months from the date of the first publication of this notice or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit of the estate.  
The name, mailing address, and telephone number of the distributee or distributee's attorney is: Casey Dorman Lawson, P.O. Box 1688, Fayetteville, AR 72702.  
This notice first published 15th day of July, 2019.

### NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION OF TITLE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BENTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS  
CIVIL DIVISION  
SERENITY HOMES, INC. PLAINTIFF

v. CASE NO: 04CV-19-1504  
BELLA VISTA VENTURES LLC, EDNA M. METCALF, VERTU RBS REF V0063 7LTS DEFENDANTS

### NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION OF TITLE

Notice is hereby given that a Complaint has been filed in the office of the Circuit Clerk of Benton County, Arkansas, to quiet and confirm title in and to the following described property in Benton County, Arkansas:

Tract I  
Section: 04 Township: 20N Range: 31W Acreage: 0.31  
Lot: 54 Block: 4 City: BELLA VISTA VILLAGE Addition BELGRAVIA SD: CBV6  
Taxes last paid by: Bella Vista Ventures, LLC

Tract II  
Section: 09 Township: 20N Range: 31W Acreage:

0.38 Lot: 34 Block: 3 City: BVV Addition: CARDIGAN SD: CBV6  
Taxes last paid by: Edna M. Metcalf

Tract III  
Section: 4 Township: 20N Range: 31 W Acreage: 0.29  
Lot: 30 Block: 4 City: BELLA VISTA VILLAGE Addition: BELGRAVIA SD: CBV6  
Taxes last paid by: VERTU RBS REF V0063 7LTS

Any person, firm, corporation, or improvement district that can set up any right to the real property so conveyed and forfeited is hereby notified to appear herein, to show cause why the title to the real property described herein should not be confirmed, quieted, and vested in Serenity Homes, Inc., Plaintiff herein, in fee simple.

SERENITY HOMES, INC.  
By:  
Casey Dorman Lawson #2003130

DAVIS, CLARK, BUTT, CARITHERS, TAYLOR, PLC  
P.O. Box 1688  
Fayetteville, AR 72702-1688  
(479) 521-7600

### PROBATE NOTICE

#### NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

#### FOURTEENTH DIVISION

ESTATE OF THOMAS F. WORTHEN, DECEASED  
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS: 5130 Shriver Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50312

DATE OF DEATH: May 22, 2018  
DOCKET NO.: 60PR-19-1256

An instrument dated March 14, 2003 was on the 17 th day of June 2019, admitted to probate as the last will of the above named decedent and the undersigned has been appointed Executrix thereunder. A contest of the probate of the will can be effected only by filing a petition within the time provided by law.  
All persons having claims against the estate must exhibit them, duly verified, to the undersigned within six (6) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit in the estate.  
This notice first published on July 22, 2019.

Amy L. Namowitz Worthen, Executrix  
c/o Dan C. Young  
Rose Law Firm,  
a Professional Association  
120 E. Fourth Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201





**Future Home of KATV**  
10 Turtle Creek Lane, Little Rock

## Future TV Studio Buy Tunes In at \$4.3 Million

A 25,248-SF office building in Little Rock's Riverdale area tipped the scales at \$4.36 million.

**KATV LLC**, an affiliate of **Sinclair Broadcast Group Inc.** of Cockeysville, Maryland, purchased the 2-acre 10 Turtle Creek Lane development and an adjoining undeveloped 1.81-acre parcel.

The seller is the **Student Loan Guarantee Foundation of Arkansas Inc.**, led by **Sue Balest**. The land previously was tied to a November 2004 mortgage of \$1.2 million held by Little Rock's **Pulaski Bank & Trust**.

The foundation bought the site for \$895,333 in November 2004 from **Pleasant Valley Inc.**, led by **Marion Burton**.



### Real Deals George Waldon

George@ABPG.com

#### Mini Purchase

A 262-unit mini-storage project in south Little Rock changed hands in a \$1.25 million deal.

**Red Dot Storage 157 LLC** of Louisville, Colorado, acquired **The Storage Place** at 4600 and 4607 Hoffman Road from **Bison Asset Management LLC** of Frisco, Texas.

Bison Asset bought the 6.66-acre development for \$775,000 in January 2017 from the namesake trusts of **Lawrance** and **Beverly Doyle**.

The trusts purchased the project for \$1.23 million in December 2004 from **Pantanal LLC**, led by **Arlanders Etheley**.

#### Professional Purchase

A 9,909-SF office building in North Little Rock weighed in at \$1.2 million.

#### Elementary Transaction

The former **Park Hill Elementary** in North Little Rock sold for \$900,000.

**The Ridge Assembly**, led by **Kenneth Meckfessel**, purchased the 33,342-SF site at 3801 JFK Blvd.

The seller is **I-40 Kerr LLC**, led by **Byron McKimney** and **Billy Morden**.

The deal is backed with a 3-year loan of \$720,000 from **First Arkansas Bank & Trust** of Jacksonville and a \$200,000 mortgage carried by I-40 Kerr. The 4.92-acre development was bought for \$530,000 in March 2017.

#### Dollar Site

A 1.34-acre commercial site in North Little Rock drew a \$250,000 transaction.

**PB General Holdings (Prothro Junction) LLC**, led by **Leonard Boen**, acquired the land near the northeast corner of Highway 161 and Bethany Road.

The seller is **Crew Real Estate Investments LLC**, led by **Norman Clifton**.

Construction of a **Dollar General** store is funded with a \$1 million loan from **Relyance Bank** of Pine Bluff.

Crew purchased the land in August 2017 as part of a \$95,000 deal with **James** and **Jenny Neal**.

#### Valley Falls Manor

A 5,933-SF home in the Valley Falls Estates neighborhood of west Little Rock tipped the scales at \$1.52 million. **Barton** and **Marion Hankins** bought the house from **No. 2 Spring Valley Lane LLC**, led by **Ayasha** and **Rodney Thomason**.

The residence previously was tied to a March 2015 mortgage of \$1.4 million held by **Simmons Bank** of Pine Bluff.

The property was acquired for \$1.6 million more than four years ago from **Michael** and **Jerene Montgomery**.

#### Woodlands Edge

A 5,053-SF home in west Little Rock's Woodlands Edge neighborhood weighed in at \$1.12 million. **Severin** and **Ana Clara Pouly** purchased the house from **Randy Wright Builders LLC**.

The deal is financed with a 30-year loan of \$990,000 from **U.S. Bank** of Cincinnati. The residence previously was linked with an August 2018 mortgage of \$850,000 held by **First Security Bank** of Searcy.

The site was bought for \$172,000 in January 2018 from **Rocket Properties LLC**, led by **Lisenne Rockefeller**.

#### Greathouse Bend

A 4,556-SF home in Little Rock's Greathouse Bend neighborhood rang

up an \$859,500 sale. **Justin Harris** and **Mandy Marshall** acquired the 1-acre residential spread on the Arkansas River from **Worth** and **Stacy Gibson**.

The deal is backed with a 30-year loan of \$687,600 from **IberiaBank** of Lafayette, Louisiana. The property previously was tied to a November 2014 mortgage of \$843,200 held by **Bank of Little Rock Mortgage Corp.**

The Gibsons purchased the house for \$950,000 in April 2010 from **Miles Goggans** and an adjoining 0.6-acre parcel for \$160,000 in March 2014 from **Stephen** and **Betty Bilheimer**.

#### Deauville Place

A 4,103-SF home in the Deauville Place neighborhood of west Little Rock's Chenal Valley development is under new ownership after a \$710,000 deal.

**Tanmay Bhamare** bought the house from the **WK-LSM Family Trust**, led by **Wade** and **Kimberly McGill**.

The deal is funded with a 30-year loan of \$718,783 from **Arvest Bank** of Fayetteville.

The McGills acquired the location for \$115,000 in September 2014 from **Gary Loyd Jr.** and his wife, **Yojaina**.

#### Adkins Estates

A 4,498-SF home in west Little Rock's Adkins Estates neighborhood sold for \$705,000.

**Robert Hall** purchased the house from **Robert** and **Laura Vogel**.

The Vogels bought the location for \$159,000 in February 2008 from **Jennifer Day**.

#### Normandy Abode

A 3,440-SF home in the Normandy neighborhood of Little Rock changed hands in a \$588,000 sale.

**Tara Tinnin** acquired the house from **Steve** and **Robin Mangan**.

The deal is financed with a 25-year loan of \$388,000 from **Regions Bank** of Birmingham, Alabama.

The residence previously was linked with a February 2013 mortgage of \$290,000 held by Little Rock's **Metropolitan National Bank**.

The Mangans purchased the property for \$129,000 in April 1992 from **Robert Searcy**. ■



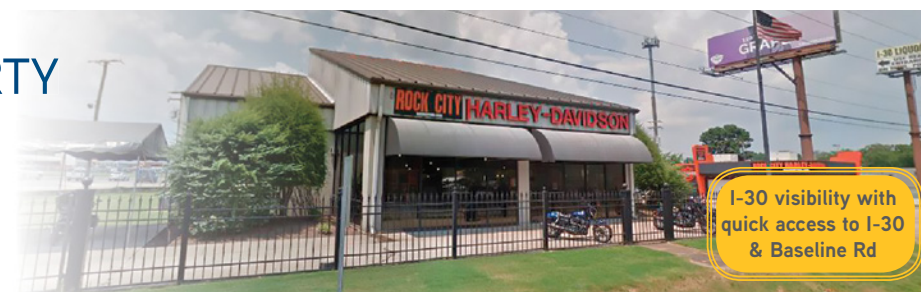
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quick access to I-30  
& Baseline Rd



# Arkansas Business Exec Q&A

To submit questions or interview suggestions, email [GMoritz@ABPG.com](mailto:GMoritz@ABPG.com)

**A.J. Gary** sees a New Madrid Seismic Zone earthquake as Arkansas' "most likely worst case disaster."

**What would you like the government to focus on to prevent disasters and react better to them?** Natural disasters cannot be prevented. However, the effects of a natural disaster can be mitigated. Mitigation to disaster-damaged facilities and pre-disaster mitigation are key to minimizing the effects of a disaster. Although it can be difficult to prevent a manmade disaster, increased awareness and utilizing technology to detect man-made threats and hazards can help lessen, or even prevent, some of those events from taking place. I believe local, state and federal governments should promote a culture of thinking outside the box for mitigation proposals and should work harder to approve more creative mitigation measures.

**Emergencies related to climate change (floods, etc.) are happening more frequently. What is ADEM doing to plan for the increasing frequency and severity of climate change-related emergencies?** We are continuously planning and conducting exercises so we are ready to handle disasters. The planning and exercises are done in coordination with local emergency management and state agencies. Everyone should develop family preparedness plans and disaster kits. They need to ensure enough insurance coverage for all types of disasters, including flood insurance. The ADEM Recovery Branch stays trained on the ever-changing disaster grant programs available, and continues to look for new and creative avenues for disaster assistance.

## This Week: A.J. Gary

Director of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management

**What should businesses do to prepare for emergencies like floods, tornadoes and power outages? Does ADEM have resources to assist them along these lines?** Arkansas businesses should ensure insurance coverage is sufficient. Develop business preparedness plans and offer disaster training to employees. Practice those plans. Make sure that your employees know what the processes and procedures are if an emergency situation should arise. Are they prepared to be shut down for an undetermined amount of time? Are they prepared to rebuild and get back to business? ADEM offers outreach programs, training and other resources on our website. The best thing businesses can do is prioritize their risk management. They are the best ones to know what risks their companies face. They should have contingency plans to ensure continuity of operations. Have a plan to address not only the physical facilities but also their personnel. How will they operate if a large number of staff cannot reach the company or have to be off to take care of family impacted by a disaster? ADEM's critical infrastruc-

### Bio: A.J. Gary

**Background:** A.J. Gary was named in 2016 to lead the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management. He is also the state's homeland security adviser. Previously, Gary was security and compliance director of the Arkansas Scholarship Lottery. He spent 28 years in law enforcement, including a stint as Conway's police chief. Gary was chief security administrator for Air Transport International LLC as well. He has a bachelor's and master's degree from Central Baptist College and Arkansas State University, respectively. ■



[PHOTO BY KERRY PRICHARD]

ture branch can assist companies in threat assessments and active threats. We also want the businesses

to develop relationships with local emergency managers and other local support agencies. ■

## LITTLE ROCK WATER RECLAMATION AUTHORITY PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT TODAY AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Little Rock Water Reclamation Authority (LRWRA) **strives to protect and reclaim our most precious natural resource – water.** Along with continued preventive maintenance and renewing the city's aging sewer infrastructure, we have many other efforts to protect public health and the environment. Our work at LRWRA ensures Little Rock remains vibrant for years to come.

**For more information on LRWRA's improvement projects and how you can join us in this effort, visit [lrwra.com](http://lrwra.com).**







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ONE HUNDRED  
YEARS**

1919 to 2019

# We're invested in Arkansas.

When Neal Garver founded our company a century ago, he helped pave the way for generations of future engineers to successfully work with communities all across Arkansas and surrounding states to satisfy their transportation needs. The transportation industry has changed since 1919, but our company is still paving the way for engineers to succeed. We're proud of our employees who recently volunteered to help establish an Arkansas chapter of WTS International, which is an organization dedicated to the professional advancement of women in transportation.

*Proud to be a founding corporate partner of WTS Arkansas.  
For more information, email [Info@WTSArkansas.com](mailto:Info@WTSArkansas.com).*

