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July 15, 2021

Members of the Northwest Arkansas Council,

As I reflect on the previous year, I feel a sense of pride. Northwest Arkansas is a place filled with possibility and opportunity. And, perhaps more importantly, it's a community where everyone is welcome.

Over its 30-year history, the Northwest Arkansas Council has convened the community to find solutions to tough problems. The Council played a similar role during this challenging year by bringing together community members to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Through unique collaboration with health care providers, businesses, educators, government, nonprofits and philanthropic partners, we worked to develop and distribute resources to organizations and individuals hardest hit by the pandemic.

Like many others, we've adapted. We are acting with urgency to address the most pressing challenges in our community. And, we're doubling down on efforts to strengthen the vibrant economy that defines the region.

Over the past few years, the Northwest Arkansas Council has pursued a robust number of initiatives to address key workforce issues the region must solve.

Companies across the region were already facing the challenges of filling more than 10,000 open jobs. That number, combined with challenges presented by COVID-19, requires approaches with both short- and long-term goals.

To set the region on the road to recovery and establish long-term economic prosperity, the Council expanded efforts in workforce development and talent attraction.

More workforce training offerings, apprenticeships and career education programs were developed. The talent incentive program for remote workers attracted over 30,000 applicants who expressed interest in moving to Northwest Arkansas. The program is capturing national attention and helping create a long-term talent pipeline.

Despite these efforts, Northwest Arkansas is not a front-of-mind job destination and that is hampering our companies who need talent to excel. We must do more to stand up for what's right and ensure people across the country realize what we already know, "Life Works Here."

It's been an honor to serve as presiding co-chair. I've enjoyed working with the talented Northwest Arkansas Council team, the Executive Committee and our esteemed members to keep Northwest Arkansas a thriving community to live and work. I'm proud of the work we have accomplished and look forward to a bright future.

Thank you.



Karen Roberts
2020-2021 Presiding Co-Chair



Karen Roberts
PRESIDING CO-CHAIR

After years of tremendous growth, Northwest Arkansas outpaces the rest of the country with its booming economy and spectacular quality of life.

National rankings from U.S. News & World Report, Fifty Grande, Heartland Forward, League of American Bicyclists, Livability, Milken Institute, Money, PeopleforBikes, Porch and USA Today reflect what we already know – in Northwest Arkansas

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IN 2021, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT RANKED NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

#4

Cheapest
Places
to Live

#8

Best Places
to Live

#22

Fastest
Growing
Places

#23

Best Places to Live
for Quality of Life

#106

Best Places
to Retire

The Milken Institute ranked
Northwest Arkansas

No. 15

among 200 large metros
in its 2021 list of
Best-Performing Large Cities.

That's up 22 spots
from its No. 37
ranking in
2020.

The region ranks
No. 7 nationally for
its job growth rate.



University of Arkansas Sam M. Walton College of Business ranked **No. 28** best public school of business and **No. 10** best public specialty program in supply chain management/logistics by U.S. News & World Report. U of A's undergraduate supply chain management program ranked **No. 1** in the nation by Gartner.

The Mountain Biking Capital of the World is living up to its name with several cycling-related rankings.



In 2021, PeopleforBikes ranked three Northwest Arkansas cities in its top 100 out of 767 cities.

Fayetteville is the first city in the U.S. to be designated Bike City by Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) and will host the UCI Cyclocross World Championships in January 2022.



Money named Bentonville **No. 41** on its **Best Places to Live in America**.



Travel guide website Fifty Grande listed Fayetteville on its **Best of the U.S. Bucket List**.



Southern Living named Fayetteville one of the **South's Best Cities on the Rise** in 2021.



The New York Times featured Ponca and the Buffalo River among its **52 Places to Love 2021**.

Northwest Arkansas' largest companies remain on top of the Fortune 500 for the ninth consecutive year.

#1

Walmart

Remains on top

#73

Tyson

Up 6 spots

#315

J.B. HUNT

Up 31 spots



A YEAR IN REVIEW

Northwest Arkansas has amazing outdoor amenities, world-class art, an innovative food scene, a thriving business sector and many new developments in the works. We've compiled some of the biggest happenings of the year to show why Life Works Here.



LIFESTYLE AND OUTDOOR AMENITIES

From cycling, hiking and kayaking to arts and music, there's a little something for everyone in Northwest Arkansas.

Several exciting outdoor parks and recreation facilities opened over the past year, including Osage Park in Bentonville, J.B. and Johnelle Hunt Family Ozark Highlands Nature Center in Springdale and Railyard Park in Rogers. There's more on the horizon, from the WOKA Whitewater Park near Siloam Springs to The Ramble in downtown Fayetteville.

In 2020, Bentonville staked its rightful place as the Mountain Biking Capital of the World. With the city's innovative trail network and remarkable cycling amenities, it's hard to argue.

Two cultural institutions completed or announced major expansions in recent months.

The Walmart AMP completed its expansion in 2020 that has enhanced both artist and patron experiences. The AMP kicked off its most impressive lineup ever this summer with artists like Jonas Brothers, Pitbull and Luke Bryan.

Crystal Bridges revealed plans for a 100,000 sq. ft. expansion that will allow the museum to showcase its growing collection and welcome more visitors to experience the power of art, in an inclusive environment.

NEW COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

While the pandemic changed the dynamics of the traditional office space, the demand for commercial real estate in the region continues. Several facilities completed construction in the last year and lots more is coming.

Highlands Oncology Group opened its 125,000 sq. ft. facility in Springdale in August 2020. Next door, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield is finishing up its 81,000 sq. ft. NWA headquarters.

Several retail, office and residential facilities are coming up in the Pinnacle Hills area of Rogers, including Bellview Urban Center, Founders Plaza, One Uptown, Pinnacle Heights and Pinnacle Village. Other recent additions to the area are Top Golf and the world-famous McClard's Bar-B-Q.

In downtown Bentonville, Walmart is making great progress on its new home office, and Ledger will soon offer innovative office solutions. Bentonville will soon be home to a new facility for remote workers after being selected as one of five finalists in Common's Remote Worker Hub program.

PHILANTHROPY

Philanthropy plays a major role in improving the quality of life for everyone in Northwest Arkansas. We're highlighting some of the year's biggest philanthropic announcements.

The Walton Family Foundation continues a philanthropic vision begun by Walmart founders Sam and Helen Walton. In 2021, the foundation announced a five-year plan that prioritizes three goals: championing community-driven change to ensure the foundation's work reflects the voices and needs of communities in which it works; prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion in the grants the foundation makes and the voices it engages; collaborating with partners to develop innovative approaches that bring people, resources and ideas together from across government, local communities, and the private and

philanthropic sectors. The Walton Family Foundation will provide more than \$2 billion in philanthropic support over the next five years to achieve these goals.

The Alice L. Walton Foundation and Olivia and Tom Walton through the Walton Family Foundation established a \$1 million statewide fund to improve the quality of life for LGBTQ Arkansans by providing critical services to the community.

Excellerate Foundation announced a new name in 2020 as it works to impact the greatest needs of Northwest Arkansas. Excellerate Foundation stepped up to help residents most impacted by the pandemic. In partnership with Benton County, the foundation will distribute over \$8 million in Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds to residents struggling to make rent. Through its Hark program, the foundation is working with eligible households to connect them to ERA dollars and other resources, and payment is made directly to landlords and utility companies.

In 2020, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation pledged \$100 million over five years through a Center for Racial Equity to address racial disparities in the U.S. In February 2021, the first \$14.3 million was distributed to 16 nonprofits throughout the country.

The Tyson Family Foundation made a number of notable gifts over the past year to improve access to the arts in its hometown of Springdale. In addition, the foundation contributed \$300,000 to the University of Arkansas to create the Tyson Digital Library Fund and the Tyson Art Publications Fund for the University of Arkansas Press.



PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

The Northwest Arkansas health care community came together in a big way to tackle unprecedented challenges associated with COVID-19. Collaboration and coordination among health care providers, businesses, nonprofits and countless volunteers has kept our community “Safe and Strong” as we continue to battle this virus.

Two projects announced earlier this year will have a huge impact on health care and education in the region.

In March 2021, Alice Walton announced plans for a Whole Health School of Medicine and Health Sciences in Northwest Arkansas. Building evidence-based approaches, the curriculum will infuse traditional and conventional medicine with integrative techniques and will include biomedical sciences, clinical training, medical entrepreneurship, research and a capstone with Whole Health principles ingrained throughout.

In June 2021, the Arkansas Legislative Council approved nearly \$12.5 million to expand physician residencies and fellowships in Arkansas. Washington Regional and UAMS Northwest developed a plan to establish up to 92 new graduate medical education positions at Washington Regional by 2030. Northwest Arkansas has grown rapidly since Congress imposed caps on medical resident reimbursement. A health care study commissioned by the Northwest Arkansas Council in 2019 recommended the establishment of 200 additional residencies. At full capacity, the programs have a projected annual economic impact of \$65.8 million.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Northwest Arkansas continues its focus on economic development by investing in research and innovation.

A \$194.7 million grant from the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation will establish the University of Arkansas Institute for Integrative and Innovative Research, transforming the research, innovation and economic development culture of the university. The grant is one of the largest single private gifts ever given to a university for advancing research and economic development. The grant will grow the university’s research engine and also drive commercialization and entrepreneurship education.

INFRASTRUCTURE & POLICY

Improvements in infrastructure are necessary to keep up with the region's rapid population growth, including housing and transportation.

Issue 1, which proposed for the permanent extension of the 2012 half-cent sales tax for highways, was approved by voters in November 2020. The tax will support building additional sections of the U.S. 412 Bypass, improvements to Arkansas Highway 112 and better access to XNA. The Missouri-Arkansas Connector, or Bella Vista Bypass, is on track to be completed this fall. The Northwest Arkansas Council worked closely with the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission as the commission pursued a \$25 million federal grant that makes the highway's completion possible.

A Workforce Housing Center launched in March 2021 with support from the Walton Family Foundation. The center will be incubated at the Council and collaborate with community partners to strategically address housing needs and priorities.

Northwest Arkansas National Airport announced low-cost carrier Breeze Airways will offer nonstop flights to New Orleans, San Antonio and Tampa. The addition of Breeze gives travelers even more options and will eventually lower prices on other airlines. Other carriers have followed suit with the addition of nonstop flights to Fort Lauderdale, Houston and St. Petersburg by Allegiant and Las Vegas by Frontier.

SUSTAINABILITY

Efforts to keep Northwest Arkansas green, healthy and beautiful are underway, and both the Council and its members are leaders when it comes to sustainability. There are too many efforts to list them all, but here are a few examples.

A new sustainability initiative called NWA Recycles focuses on building a more circular regional economy and keeping more plastic and other recyclable materials out of landfills. The Northwest Arkansas Council is partnering with the Benton County and Boston Mountain solid waste management districts and the region's cities to explore methods to make local recycling programs more successful, consistent and user-friendly for businesses and the public.

Tyson Foods and Walmart both set ambitious goals to reach net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2050 and 2040, respectively. Tyson Foods will work with partners to identify and build on the existing net-zero pathway, focusing on investments, renewable energy, land stewardship, deforestation, manure management, farm energy, feed, fertilizer, enteric methane and external partnerships. Walmart's sustainability efforts prioritize people and the planet by aiming to source responsibly, eliminate waste and emissions, sell sustainable products and protect and restore nature.

Ozarks Electric Cooperative announced a partnership with Today's Power Inc. to create a 2.7-megawatt solar park on 25 acres of land near Lincoln to provide renewable energy to multi-industry entities, including the city of Springdale, Elkins Public Schools, Lincoln Public Schools and OzarksGo.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The availability of skilled talent (and the ability to attract more) is the top factor for businesses today as they determine where to invest. Developing talent starts early and involves collaboration with parents, educators, businesses, and community and state leaders.

The State of Arkansas has made major progress in developing the state's workforce, including Governor Hutchinson's computer-science education and coding initiatives, apprenticeships and efforts to increase teacher salaries.

The Northwest Arkansas Council works to ensure that there are sufficient education and training opportunities available to support our workforce. Northwest Arkansas has more than 10,000 open jobs seeking a wide range of skills. It is often necessary for the local workforce to acquire new expertise to fill many of these jobs.

The key objective is to transform the region's workforce system into a best-of-class, demand-driven model to increase the supply of appropriately skilled labor. We connect employers with educators and leverage public and private sector funds and engagement.

CareersNWA

The Council established a career hub to connect job seekers to the most up-to-date career guidance and job opportunities in NWA.

A new Smart Resume® feature allows career-seekers to build profiles and post resumés that are accessible to employers. Employers can also post available positions. The Council is

promoting the feature to high schools, post-secondary institutions, universities and among adult job-seekers in the region. Simplifying the job search process will deliver a larger talent pool to employers. Learn more at careersnwa.com.

Workforce Training

Our workforce development efforts continue to focus on K-12, post-secondary and adult upskilling offerings, bringing about new programs, facilities and partnerships.

Career Education

The Council works with local school districts to provide every learner with rigorous, career coaching opportunities in years 10, 11 and 12. We also support and develop local schools' efforts to market new programs to students, parents and educators to increase enrollments, completions and certifications.



Secondary and Post-Secondary Training

The Council is helping establish dozens of new regional training programs in health care, IT and skilled trades. We support efforts to expand and transform existing programs, such as the Northwest Technical Institute, into world-class training institutions to increase enrollments and produce more graduates. The Council also supports partners with non-credit workforce training at Business & Industry Training, NorthWest Arkansas Community College and the University of Arkansas Global Campus.

Workers who are able to successfully learn new skills or build on the talents are in position to earn higher incomes, provide more for their families and improve their quality of life.

Information Technology Apprenticeships

We're building a diverse network of IT workforce development efforts to assist employers in the region in filling IT jobs. The Council identified the primary IT needs of regional employers to be software development, cybersecurity, data science/analyst and general IT.

Through our efforts, numerous training providers have launched programs to address regional IT workforce needs with the following training partners:

- University of Arkansas Global Campus
- Arkansas Coding Academy
- Forge Institute
- LaunchCode

In addition, we formed a strategic partnership with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences to advance IT apprenticeships in the region and recently launched a pre-apprenticeship program.

What's Ahead

Health Care

Northwest Technical Institute announced plans for a health care training facility. NTI is coordinating with the Council's Health Care Transformation Division to align its curriculum with the whole health model.

Computer Science Education

The Council is working with the University of Texas IC² Institute to create an integrated approach to computer science education and training to meet talent needs in Northwest Arkansas.

The effort will study top-tier and rapidly-improving computer science programs at Research 1 universities to uncover insights, practices and potential programmatic templates for enhancements into advanced educational strategies. Emerging computer science approaches at small colleges and universities, community college models, and K-12 coding and bootcamp programs will also provide valuable guidance. We hope to uncover other regional collaborations among academic institutions that can serve as models for NWA.

The research and recommendations will provide proven strategies to grow the region's computer science ecosystem and open new talent pipelines for employers across Northwest Arkansas.





TALENT ATTRACTION: Incentive Program



200+ Media Stories



2 Billion+ Impressions



350,000+ Website Views

Forbes

BBC

The New York Times

FOX
BUSINESS

WSJ

TRAVEL+
LEISURE

lonely planet

the
Skimm

In November 2020, the Northwest Arkansas Council launched its “Life Works Here” talent incentive which pulled in over 30,000 applications and garnered more than 200 stories in local, national and worldwide publications. The program will bring 100 talented people to NWA – and 100+ more of their family members – from all over the country who are adding to the vibrancy of our thriving community.

We also launched a partnership with Airbnb to help potential residents explore the region and “try before they buy.” This collaboration follows Airbnb’s recent study that 44% of people from five countries are interested in trying out a new city before buying a home there. Applicants/recruits can visit Northwest Arkansas and collaborate on Airbnb Online Experiences to get acquainted with region before making a relocation decision.

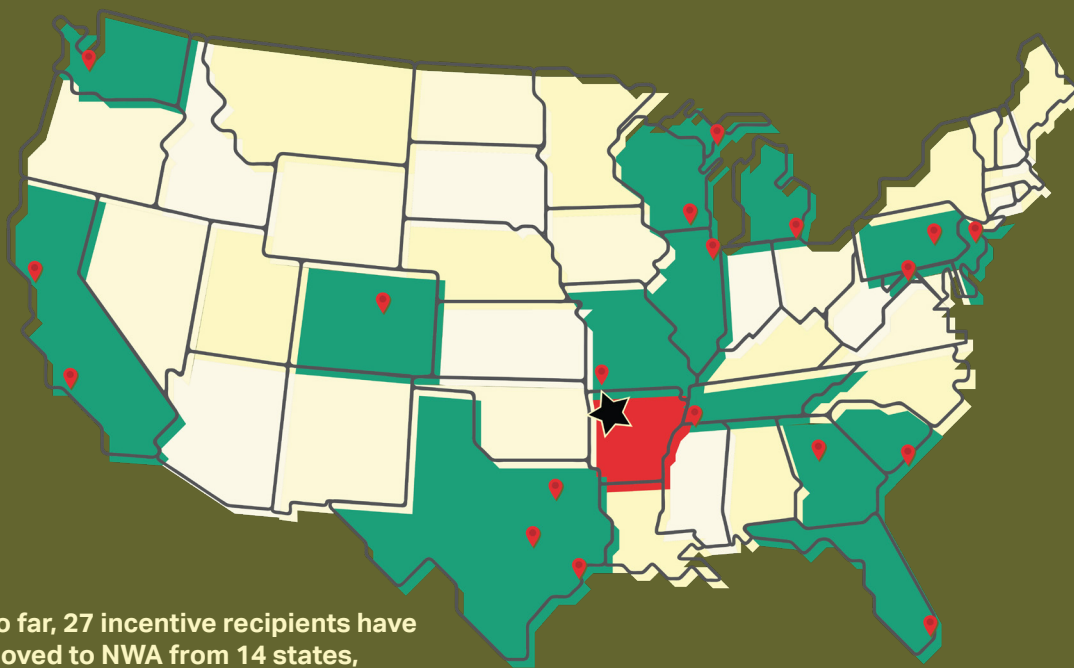
Northwest Arkansas Talent Network

The Northwest Arkansas Talent Network serves as a centralized platform to connect people interested in relocating to the area with featured job openings and to partner with recruiters and companies.

The network has hundreds of members looking for roles in the region and features jobs from local companies. More talent is being added daily, and the Council is actively seeking to expand the number of NWA companies involved.

We are using the talent network to power the NWA Tech Summit Professional Development Hub, a digital landing page where global tech talent can access and signal their interest and explore current opportunities offered by the region’s leading companies.

Learn more at talent.findingnwa.com



So far, 27 incentive recipients have moved to NWA from 14 states, Washington, D.C. and Germany.



TALENT ATTRACTION: Regional Branding

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The Northwest Arkansas Council works to highlight the impressive quality of life in Northwest Arkansas to make the region more attractive to skilled talent across the globe. The region boasts incredible job opportunities combined with world-class arts, quality of life amenities and a low cost of living that is often overlooked as individuals and families are considering places to live.

Over the past year, the Council developed a campaign to better position NWA as an attractive and relevant place for creatives, STEM and tech professionals.

The awareness and image-building campaign embraces the successful tagline: “Life Works Here.” The campaign will include a robust media buy with a combination of media relations, traditional advertising, influencer and experiential campaigns in cities like Austin, Charlotte, Minneapolis and Seattle. These markets are targeted due to their high concentrations of tech talent and artists.

The plan is to tell a cohesive and authentic story about all the things that are unique to NWA and help people discover what a great place it is. We’ll highlight the stories of progress and paint a picture of a region that’s innovating a forward-thinking way of living, working and playing.

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COUNCIL PROGRAMS:

Entrepreneurship



The Northwest Arkansas Council is focused on supporting innovation and building a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northwest Arkansas. Local companies are creating jobs and reinvesting in our area in unique ways, and we're working to ensure that continues for generations.

The Council's StartupNWA initiative makes important connections among investors, entrepreneurs and the region's established companies. Between that access and our great lifestyle amenities, NWA is the ideal place for entrepreneurs focused on building businesses in supply chain, food and consumer retail.

Program Highlights

- Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) announced its free, year-long bilingual Business Accelerator program in the Northwest Arkansas community.
- Get Shift Done for Northwest Arkansas provided nearly \$100,000 in supplemental income to displaced hospitality workers in the region. In just over 10 months, 280,455 meals were distributed to food-insecure community members. Get Shift Done was named the No. 1 Most Innovative Not-for-Profit Companies in 2021 by Fast Company.
- Northwest Arkansas was featured in Revolution's Rise of the Rest Tech Talent Tour. The Tech Talent Tour showcased cities across the country and gave job-seekers an opportunity to learn about 1,000+ job openings at more than 100 venture-backed companies.
- Plug and Play Tech Center Northwest Arkansas continues to offer its unique innovation platform to bring supply chain and logistics startups to NWA. The program is supported by Arc Best, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Crowley, Georgia-Pacific, J.B Hunt, Northwest Arkansas Council, Tyson Foods, Walmart and Walton Family Foundation.
- WeWork Labs launched in Northwest Arkansas, providing a global innovation platform for early-stage startups and forward-thinking enterprise.



COUNCIL PROGRAMS: Health Care

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The Council developed its Health Care Transformation Division to facilitate collaboration among providers to make the region a destination for health care. The division is committed to building Northwest Arkansas into a premier health care destination through increased access to care, more availability of high-level specialty care, and integrating wellness of mind and body as an integral component of health care.

Members of the division include Arkansas Children's Northwest, Community Clinic, Mercy, Northwest Health, UAMS Northwest, University of Arkansas, Washington Regional Medical Center, Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks and Whole Health Institute.

Ryan Cork joined as the division's executive director in January 2021 after serving in leadership positions at the Cleveland Clinic in the Middle East and North Africa.

Program Highlights

- The Council coordinated with multiple health care providers to develop a COVID-19 safety campaign and a mass vaccination effort.
- Dozens of vaccination events led to more than 15,000 people getting vaccinated at Council-led events. J.B. Hunt developed a playbook for small- and large-scale events to be used as a model for other communities.
- A massive effort and collaboration among health care entities and nonprofits provided information, outreach and contact tracing services in the region's Marshallese and Hispanic communities. UAMS Northwest and Community Clinic led the program with a \$7 million CARES Act grant. Outcomes showed in reduced death and incidents of COVID-19 among both groups.
- The Arkansas Legislative Council approved nearly \$12.5 million in funding to establish more physician residency programs and fellowships in Northwest Arkansas. Washington Regional and UAMS Northwest developed a plan through a process called "geographic wage classification" to establish up to 92 new graduate medical education positions at Washington Regional by 2030. The first 10 residency slots will be available in 2023. At full capacity, the programs have a projected annual economic impact of \$65.8 million.



COUNCIL PROGRAMS:

Infrastructure

Since its inception, the Northwest Arkansas Council has worked to advance infrastructure priorities to support economic competitiveness, development and population growth in Northwest Arkansas.

We're always looking to improve our highways, buildings and transportation. Highways and air service remain Council priorities, along with providing the collaborative capacity for various players in the region to address recycling, water supply, water quality and mobility options to align their work and identify efficiencies. Another growing concern that the Council is tackling is the availability of appropriately priced workforce housing.

Workforce Housing Center



The workforce housing center launched in 2021 and is focused on the emerging issue of housing affordability in Benton and Washington counties in Northwest Arkansas.

The goal is to create a variety of well-designed housing options and mixed-income neighborhoods for the region's workers and their families.

The center will collaborate with community partners to develop a strategic plan specific to housing needs and priorities. It will promote housing development in proximity to employment centers, lifestyle amenities and services such as diverse mobility options.

A national search for an executive director is underway.



Recycling

A new sustainability initiative called NWA Recycles will focus on building a more circular regional economy and keeping more plastic and other recyclable materials out of landfills.

The Northwest Arkansas Council is partnering with the Benton County and Boston Mountain solid waste management districts and the region's cities to explore methods to make local recycling programs more successful, consistent and user-friendly for businesses and the public.

NWA Recycles builds off the recommendations of a Council study conducted in 2020 by The Sustainability Consortium, a global nonprofit that advises businesses and organizations on making products and supply chains less wasteful and more environmentally friendly.

Dan Holtmeyer will serve as the Council's first recycling program manager.



Highways

The Northwest Arkansas Council helped lead the effort to obtain funding to complete the Bella Vista Bypass. The Council worked with Arkansas' federal delegation and Missouri officials to secure \$25 million in federal funding to complete the state line project. The project is scheduled to be complete this year.

Issue 1, which advocated for the permanent extension of the 2012 half-cent sales tax for highways, was approved by voters in November 2020. The tax will support building additional sections of the U.S. 412 Bypass in Springdale, improvements to Arkansas Highway 112 from Bentonville to Fayetteville and a better highway toward the Northwest Arkansas National Airport.

Air Travel

Northwest Arkansas National Airport continues to rebuild its traffic after the pandemic curtailed air travel in early 2020.

This summer, Breeze Airways established XNA as one of its launch cities with four-times-a-week flights to New Orleans, San Antonio and Tampa.

The Breeze announcement was followed just three days later by Allegiant Air's announcement of a nonstop flight to St. Pete-Clearwater starting in July, and then nonstop to Fort Lauderdale starting in October.

Frontier Airlines announced twice-a-week flights from Northwest Arkansas to Las Vegas, starting in August. Those flights will depart on Fridays and Mondays.

Every airline serving XNA — Allegiant, Breeze, American, Delta, Frontier and United — is starting to see more passengers as airlines continue to ramp up offerings at XNA.

The Northwest Arkansas Council works closely with XNA administrators, ensuring airlines better understand the needs of both businesses and leisure travelers.



COUNCIL PROGRAMS: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The Northwest Arkansas Council's EngageNWA initiative fosters inclusivity as our region's growing diversity propels us forward both socially and economically. As a convener and connector for leaders in business, government and the community, this program provides a platform to demonstrate shared values, practical strategies for engagement and positive results around efforts to build a more inclusive region.

The NWA Leadership Pledge established just a year ago secured the commitment of more than 190 businesses and organizations to join the regional effort to establish a more equitable and inclusive region. A recent partnership with Walmart and several business leaders flooded the airways with messages of inclusion to make it clear that everyone belongs and is welcome in this region.

Businesses committed to improving their inclusion efforts by participating in the 2021 Northwest Arkansas Business DEI Cohort. The Council, in partnership with the five chambers of commerce and 15 small- and mid-sized businesses, provided training and capacity building resulting in each entity creating its own DEI plan.

Over the past 3.5 years, EngageNWA has provided trainings, workshops and DEI-focused panel discussions for over 2,500 people in NWA.





COUNCIL PROGRAMS:

Arts & Culture

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Creative Arkansas Community Hub & Exchange (CACHE) elevates Northwest Arkansas as a leading region of arts, culture, and creativity — an inclusive, inspiring and equitable ecosystem of diverse artists, businesses, nonprofits and communities.

Bridge Fund

CACHE established an arts and culture bridge fund with support from the Walton Family Foundation that distributed \$750,000 to nonprofits impacted by COVID-19.

Creative Hubs

CACHE celebrated the launch of a new artist residency space, CACHE Studios, with ART PARTY in May 2021. CACHE Studios is a collaborative shared space for Northwest Arkansas-based artists. Over 1,000 attendees participated in ART PARTY and the event featured 14 Northwest Arkansas artists in a range of artistic disciplines - acrobatics, music, painting and dance. CACHE Studios will eventually host artist studios where anyone in the creative community can make use of the collaborative, shared space.

Cultural Planning

CACHE will lead businesses, local governments, artists and arts stakeholders to form a comprehensive arts and culture strategy for each city and the region as a whole, that deepens the cultural identity, prioritizes and coordinates opportunities and resources, creates policies and infrastructure, and shapes the direction of arts programming and offerings. Cultural planning efforts seek to create a collective vision for Northwest Arkansas as a center for innovative, exciting, equitable arts, culture and creativity at all scales.

OZCast

This experimental variety-style digital series explores the diverse multidisciplinary landscape of the artists, communities and places in Arkansas and the heartland. A collaboration between CACHE, Crystal Bridges and the Momentary produced 15 episodes that aired from October 2020 through February 2021.

Arts Resource Desk and Community Calendar

In early 2021, CACHE launched Arts Resource Desk to provide resources, group-based learning and one-on-one consulting to artists and organizations around artistic and business needs. An interactive calendar keeps the community apprised of arts and culture events happening in the region.

Learn more at
cachecreate.org

Major Investors



**ALICE L. WALTON
FOUNDATION**



**WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION**



**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
COUNCIL**

Our Team

Nelson Peacock
PRESIDENT & CEO

Mike Harvey
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Jeannette Balleza Collins
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ryan Cork
HEALTH CARE

Allyson Esposito
ARTS & CULTURE

Nate Green
COMMUNICATIONS

Dan Holtmeyer
RECYCLING

Kathryn Hunt
OFFICE MANAGER (*retired*)

Margot Lemaster
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Alicia McCallen
SOCIAL MEDIA

Lourdes Peredo
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Joe Rollins
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Aron Shelton
TALENT INITIATIVES

Rob Smith
INFRASTRUCTURE & POLICY

Stacey Sturner
LEGAL & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Kamron Whitehead
OFFICE MANAGER



COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

2020-2021 Presiding Co-Chair: Karen Roberts
Co-Chair: Joseph E. Steinmetz
Co-Chair: Noel White/John Randal Tyson
Co-Chair: Nick Hobbs
Co-Chair: Jim Walton

Presiding Co-Chair/Secretary: Todd Simmons

Chair Emeritus: Alice Walton

Vice Chair/Treasurer: Marshall Saviers

Co-Chair's Appointee: Canem Arkan

Co-Chair's Appointee: Shaun Mayo

Nominating Committee Representative: Amy Tu

Nominating Committee Representative: Carl George

Nominating Committee Representative: April Seggebruch

Chambers of Commerce Representative: Steve Clark

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERS:

Susan Barrett

Bill Clinton

John Paul Hammerschmidt

Uvalde Lindsey

Scott Van Laningham

Alice Walton



Karen Roberts

2020-2021 Presiding Co-Chair

Karen Roberts is the executive vice president and general counsel for Walmart, Inc. In this role, she oversees the legal department, which is responsible for all legal matters affecting the company in its domestic and international markets.



Marshall Saviers

2021-2022 Presiding Co-Chair

Marshall Saviers is the president of Cushman & Wakefield | Sage Partners specializing in office and industrial real estate. He is one of the top brokers in Northwest Arkansas with an extensive client list of Fortune 500 companies.



COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jay Allen, Jay Allen Communications
Ramsay Ball, Cignus Real Estate
J. Neff Basore, Cooper Communities, Inc.
Steven Beam, Burns & McDonnell
Rod Bigelow, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
Hex Bisbee, Multi-Craft Contractors, Inc.
Roger Boskus, MLB Architecture
Clete Brewer, NewRoad Capital Partners
Steve Brooks, Eldridge Brooks Partners
Tim Broughton, McKee Foods
Raymond Burns, Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber
Ed Choate, Delta Dental
Sarah Clark, Mitchell Communications
Steve Clark, Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce
Ed Clifford, The Jones Trust
Murry Cline, APAC-Central, Inc.
Graham Cobb, Greater Bentonville Area Chamber
Justin Cole, Rich Baseball Operations
John Cooper III, Cooper Communities, Inc.
Matt Crafton, Crafton Tull
Brad Crain, Arvest Bank
Lane Crider, Beaver Water District
Marcy Doderer, Arkansas Children's Hospital
Mike Dodge, Carroll Electric Cooperative
Conner Eldridge, Eldridge Brooks Partners
John Elrod, Conner & Winters
David Erstine, CBRE | Brokerage Services
Paul Esterer, Newmark Moses Tucker Partners
John Evans, Landmark CPAs
Cathy Foraker, AT&T
Troy Galloway, Arkansas National Guard
Brock Gearhart, Greenwood Gearhart
Carl George, Georges, Inc.
Charles George, Georges, Inc.
Darin Gray, Cranford Johnson Robinson and Woods

Stan Green, Clear Energy / Lindsey Green Properties
Mary Ann Greenwood, Individual Member
D. Scott Hancock, Centennial Bank
Bradley Hardin, AEP/SWEPCO
Gary Head, Signature Bank of Arkansas
Dan Hendrix, Arkansas World Trade Center
Jessica Hendrix, Saatchi & Saatchi X
Nick Hobbs, J.B. Hunt Transport
Tom Hopper, Individual Member
Brock Hoskins, Garver
Arthur Hulbert, Siloam Springs Chamber
Jeff Hunnicutt, Highlands Oncology Group
Dennis Hunt, Stephens, Inc.
Walter Hussman, NWA Democrat-Gazette
Mitchell Johnson, Ozarks Electric Cooperative
Evelyn Jorgenson, NWA Community College
Donnie King, Tyson Foods
Jeff Koenig, Individual Member
Peter Lane, Walton Arts Center
Steven Lane, Colliers International
Randy Lawson, Lawco Energy Group
Todd Lewis, Conner & Winters
Jim Lindsey, Lindsey Management
J.D. Lowery, Arkansas Electric Cooperatives
Warren McDonald, Arkansas BlueCross BlueShield
Pearl McElfish, UAMS-Northwest
Tim McFarland, Elevate Performance
J. Riley Nicholson, Symphony of Northwest Arkansas
Becky Paneitz, Individual Member
Denten Park, Northwest Health Systems
Michael Parker, Nabholz Construction of NWA
Neal Pendergraft, Reece Moore Pendergraft
Eric Pianalto, Mercy Northwest Arkansas

Chip Pollard, John Brown University
John Rausch, Rausch Coleman Homes
Craig Rivaldo, Arvest Bank Group
Karen Roberts, Walmart
Bill Rogers, Springdale Chamber
Reynie Rutledge, First Security Bank
Adam Rutledge, First Security Bank of NWA
Marshall Saviers, Cushman & Wakefield | Sage Partners
Archie Schaffer III, Tyson Foods
Larry Shackelford, Washington Regional Medical System
Mindy Sherwood, Procter and Gamble
Mark Simmons, Simmons Foods
Todd Simmons, Simmons Foods
Jim Smith, Smith | Hurst
Charlie Spakes, Black Hills Energy
Steve Stafford, Anstaff Bank
Curt Stamp, Cox Communications
Joseph E. Steinmetz, University of Arkansas
Caryl M. Stern, Walton Family Foundation
Scott Stokenbury, C.R. Crawford Construction
Phillip Taldo, Individual Member
Kirk Thompson, J.B. Hunt Transport
Amy Tu, Tyson Foods
John Tyson, Tyson Foods
John Randal Tyson, Tyson Foods
Jerry Vest, Regions Bank
Matt Waller, University of Arkansas
Jim Walton, Arvest Bank Group
Rob Walton, Walmart Stores
Jeff Webster, Excelerate Foundation
Randy Zook, Arkansas State Chamber
Stan Zylowski, Movista

Congratulations on your retirement!

The Northwest Arkansas Council congratulates a few of our members and staff on their current or upcoming retirements.



W. Dan Hendrix retired from his dual roles as associate vice chancellor of the University of Arkansas and president and CEO of the World Trade Center Arkansas.



Trisha Montague retired as chief administrator of Arkansas Children's Northwest.



Kathryn Hunt retired as the Northwest Arkansas Council office manager.



Evelyn Jorgenson announced she will retire as president of NorthWest Arkansas Community College in June 2022.



In Memoriam

Longtime Northwest Arkansas Council member Charles Scharlau passed away on June 18 at the age of 94. An Arkansas-native, Charles served his country in WWII before returning to attend law school at the University of Arkansas.

Legendary law professor Robert A. Leflar recommended Scharlau for a job at the company that would become Southwestern Energy. He took a job as an attorney and worked in many different positions before eventually becoming its chairman, president and chief executive officer. He was involved in all facets of Southwestern Energy's business for more than 47 years.

Charles held various positions throughout the years supporting the University of Arkansas, including roles on boards of the Razorback Foundation, U of A Board of Trustees, Alumni Association and U of A Foundation. He was inducted into the Sam M. Walton College of Business "Arkansas Business Hall of Fame" in 2017.

Charles served as chairman of the Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, as president of the Arkansas Chamber of Commerce, and was a member of the Northwest Arkansas Council and various other civic organizations.

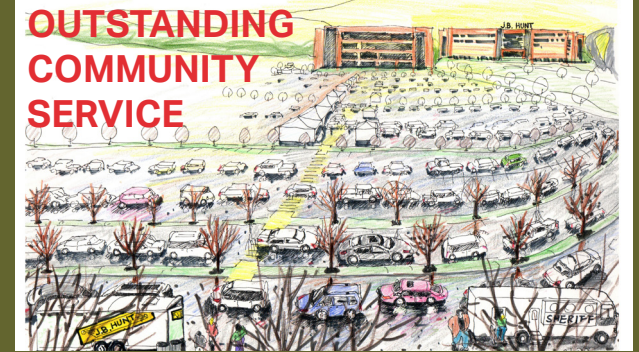


Illustration By Yang Luo-Branch

The Northwest Arkansas Council would like to recognize J.B. Hunt Transport Services for its outstanding service to the Northwest Arkansas community in response to COVID-19.

Early in the pandemic, J.B. Hunt donated and delivered 300,000 pieces of personal protective equipment for medical facilities in Northwest Arkansas, providing much-needed supplies and ensuring the safety of health care workers and patients.

J.B. Hunt continued its support in 2021 by organizing and hosting dozens of drive-thru and walk-up vaccine clinics from February to June in partnership with the Council, the health care providers and numerous community organizations and volunteers. J.B. Hunt's dedication to volunteerism and community service helped get over 15,000 residents vaccinated for COVID-19 in Benton and Washington counties.

On behalf of the entire Northwest Arkansas community, we thank you.



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