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PROUD

Inside:

**JOE SMITH, EIGHT
PROSPEROUS YEARS
OF CITY LEADERSHIP**



MEET YOUR NEW MAYOR

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MURAL PROJECT OF 2020**

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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IN NORTH LITTLE ROCK
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Two longtime North Little Rock employees bring out the best in the people they work with whom they work. Meet Jan Eberle and Felicia Hart and find out what makes them special.

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In a year of COVID-19, lockdowns, and setbacks, North Little Rock Economic Development moves forward with record gains. As they say, "Economic development is not a sprint. It is a marathon. A lot of background work, research, site preparedness, and dedication are needed to make the community better." Read about this year's major announcements along with the large influx of jobs they bring.

12 NLR Proud Update

See what streets have been completed and what is on the list going forward from the 2017 sales tax. Also get an inside look at our state and federally funded programs through our community development block grants and MetroPlan! See how North Little Rock is taking advantage of the grant money available to improve our city.

14 Mayor Joe A. Smith to Retire

For the past eight years, Mayor Joe Smith has moved the city in a positive direction. We have governed, dedicated to the betterment of our city. We have faced obstacles, both ordinary and unique. We have solved problems. We have brought people together.



On the Cover—The jewel of North Little Rock is the newly opened Argenta Plaza.

Photo by Jim Billings.



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PROUD

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Welcome Mayor-Elect Terry Hartwick

The city of North Little Rock will welcome a new mayor come January. Terry Hartwick, Director of North Little Rock Parks and Recreation and former North Little Rock Mayor, won the December run-off election. As a lifelong resident of North Little Rock and a graduate of North Little Rock High School, Hartwick has spent a great deal of his life serving his hometown. "I am honored to be the 20th Mayor of North Little Rock,"


After graduation from North Little Rock High School, Hartwick attended the University of Central Arkansas and served in the United States Air Force. Terry is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). In 1984, Hartwick was elected Mayor of the City of North Little Rock and served as Mayor until 1989. After serving as Mayor, Hartwick returned to Haverty's (where we worked from 1975-1984) as Manager of the North Little Rock division. In 2001, Hartwick became President and CEO of the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, where he served 15 successful years. Under Hartwick's leadership, the

North Little Rock Chamber has grown to become the third-largest Chamber in the State of Arkansas. Hartwick's focus in the Chamber was helping small businesses grow and be successful. On January 1, 2016, Hartwick was appointed as the new North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Director. The department has already expanded by adding three new rental facilities, upgraded the Burns Park Golf Course and equestrian trailer parking, and brought special events to North Little Rock to raise funds for One Heart Playground, an all-inclusive playground.

Mayor Hartwick's first goal is to set up a pandemic office for citizens and small businesses to ensure that they receive the benefits and assistance that is available. Other projects he would like to work on are the revitalization of East Broadway and the east part of the city to bring more services to the area. "I'm ready to do it. I can't wait until January 1. This is home. I am ready

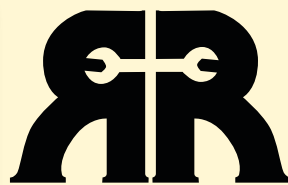


to keep the vision and the progress going."

The transition for the new administration began December 7 and will continue through the end of the year. 

Only on the web...

Visit us at nlr.ar.gov for the latest on what's happening in your city and tons of info and shortcuts to services!



Send in your requests using our Report and Repair system and get email confirmation of when your issue has been addressed. Follow the "report a problem" link on our homepage or download the app.

NLR Electric's APP

NLR Electric's NEW My Account APP is our FREE online billing payment system that allows you to view or pay your bill, monitor your energy use and much more. Please visit nlrelectric.com/my-account.



William F. Laman
Public Library System

lamanlibrary.org has a new look. They improved the site's looks, increased visibility, and streamlined their information, which makes it much easier to find what you're looking for. The new design also allows for quick links to important resources.

Get to know your NLR Employees

Getting to know - Jan Eberle-Wilkins

Jan started work with the city when she was 16 years old on August 24, 1970. Her employment started while still at North Little Rock High School through a program called Cooperative Office Education. Jan worked at Parks for four hours in the morning and went to school in the afternoon. She was paid a whopping \$1.25 per hour!

After graduating, the parks department hired her full-time. She is now the Executive Secretary to the Director of Parks and Recreation. When asked what her favorite thing about working for the city, she stated, "North Little Rock has great employees. Working together with the different departments to serve the public in any way we can has been a joy and very fulfilling. I have gained so many friends by meeting the public." Her smiling face and helpful demeanor have been a huge part of North Little Rock Parks and Recreation.

"She's just the best," says Parks Director Terry Hartwick. "She is the epitome of friendly and helpful to

everyone she meets. Jan is one of the most dedicated employees I have ever been around."


"I don't know what Parks would do without her." Interim Parks Director, Jason Rhodes says that he couldn't imagine being able to keep up without Mrs. Eberle-Wilkins. "She keeps me heading in the right direction, that's for sure!"

Outside of work, Jan and her husband Mike lead a pretty active life befitting someone who works with our city parks. She is a former marathon runner, and loves to get outdoors with Mike and their mischievous tiny little girl-dog Cody.

They love to take her jet skiing or riding side-by-side. Jan loves to collect strange, rare plants from all over the world, work in her garden, play the piano, and loves her church. "I have the best parents in the world. They raised us five kids and instilled a strong work ethic in us. We all had jobs at a young age to earn money. Growing up, we did not have everything we wanted,

but everything we needed. We were in church every time the doors were open. That was my foundation growing up and is today. I have three brothers and one sister.

I am the oldest and was bossy to them growing up. I guess I still am. I grew up in Rose City and in a very stable home. All of my family members have an incredible sense of humor. My husband Mike said that was one of the things that drew him to me – my family and our sense of humor. Mike also shares that humor, and that was a win for me."

This year on August 24, Jan Eberle-Wilkins hit her 50th anniversary with the city of North Little Rock. Her favorite quote is: "Do not be afraid of tomorrow; God is already there." 



Getting to know – Felicia Hart


One of the best smiles in the city of North Little Rock belongs to Felicia Hart. She is the city's courier who is responsible for delivering the interoffice mail around the city. Even with her smile covered behind a mask, Felicia expresses her happiness with her eyes. They are always smiling. Mayor Joe Smith said of all of his 30 years of working for the city that every day, Felicia is always in a great mood. That mood rubs off on the people around her. She makes you feel happy. And during the pandemic, Felicia has a mask to go with each outfit.

Felicia began working for the city at the Health Department in 1982.

She later moved to the Commerce Department, where she travels to each city building delivering smiles and happiness with the mail. In the course of a day, she drives and walks twice a day to different city locations from City Services in the south all the way to the Electric Department up on Maryland Avenue in the north with over 15 department locations in between. She walks about seven miles each day. Rain or shine.

Asked what she likes best about working for the city, Felicia quickly answers that it is the people she gets to see each day. She enjoys spending time talking to all of her friends throughout

her travels. Asked what she didn't enjoy, she replied, "It's all good."

Felicia was born and raised in North Little Rock. She has a son, Derrick, who is a literature professor at UAPB. She has been married to her husband, Darrell, for 29 years. He enjoys cooking; and Felicia enjoys watching football, watching bull riding, and going to concerts. 



Economic Development in 2020

Robert Birch-Director of Development City of North Little Rock



Ribbon cutting of the 600 Main Building.

Introduction

Economic development is not a sprint. It is a marathon. There is a lot of background work, research, site preparedness, and dedication. It is a very rewarding field because everything you do is to make the community better, from street and drainage projects to major announcements of larger employers coming to town. North Little Rock has a great record of landing some large employers, such as Caterpillar, Ben E Keith, L'Oreal, Union Pacific, Oakley Trucking, and others, while still looking towards helping our small business community. We have seen small companies like Safe Foods and Hum's Hardware grow into new state-of-the-art facilities right off of East Broadway. All of this happens due to having a Mayor and City Council that understand the need to be business-friendly. 2020 has been a challenging year for all sectors of the City, but the economic development engine has not stopped. In spite of a record pandemic, 2020 has been full of exciting announcements.

Education-North Little Rock School District

City Hall and the North Little Rock School District have always worked together, but never like they have in 2019 and 2020. The Mayor continues to hold his monthly meeting with the superintendent, the chief of police, the chamber, and the economic development director. These meetings keep the Mayor and the district in sync with what needs

to be done. The ongoing work to develop the Academies of Central Arkansas under the Ford Next Generation platform (learn more www.academiesofcentralarkansas.org) continued into the final stages in March of 2020. The Academies will link the economic engines of central Arkansas and the education system to create a high school environment unlike anything seen in NLR. This program has had community and business involvement with help from the North Little Rock and Little Rock Chambers of Commerce leading the





way. Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, the district and the City continued to work together with projects such as the reopening taskforce and the Old Main taskforce. The City is committed to strengthening its relationship with the district for years to come. Our education system is vital to economic development. We must always be producing a quality workforce to continue to attract business.

Education- Pulaski Tech and Shorter College

North Little Rock is lucky to have two two-year colleges:

Pulaski Technical College and Shorter College, the only two-year Historically Black College/University in the country.

The City has worked hard with these colleges over the years. Pulaski Tech has been a great partner with workforce training. They provide noncredit courses for employers. They work with employers to develop a training program for their individual needs. This is a significant component to landing businesses in central Arkansas. Companies outsource training more and more. Having a partner like Pulaski Tech is a major advantage for North Little Rock.

Recently Mayor Joe Smith, along with others, were on hand to announce The U.S. Economic Development Administration has awarded a \$2.5 million grant to the University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College (UA-PTC) to launch the first phase of its STEM Park Project on the college’s main campus in North Little Rock. UA-PTC will provide \$653,230 in matching funds to remodel its existing Science building, labs, and classrooms.

The summer of 2020 has brought together a new partnership for North Little Rock. Shorter College and the City worked together to help land the Reimagine Workforce Grant for Shorter College to provide a new business hub and innovation center for underserved and undertrained workers or those trying to reenter the workforce. This is a massive win for the college and the City. This once again shows a dedication to support education and grow our workforce. This grant of approximately 3 million dollars will help get the program up and running. North Little Rock is also donating space in its historic Rock Island Train Station off of East Broadway to house this program. There will be an opportunity to assist the public. The Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub is helping with designing programs.

Small Business

Nothing was hit harder in 2020 than small businesses. With restrictions and shutdowns, small business owners had to decide what to do.

Some were in a position where they could shift to how they did business. Others relied on Federal Cares Act Funding to ease the burden. The challenge with the first round of CARES Act funds was that they were set up to last only eight weeks. At that time, no one knew the toll the COVID-19 would take.

Immediately the economic development team, along with the North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, the State Chamber of Commerce, and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), put together information for all the State and Federal assistance programs that were offered to local businesses and unemployed workers. Daily the development office was assisting NLR residents through the complicated efforts of getting answers on unemployment benefits and funding options for their businesses. In May, the City of North Little Rock announced the Mayor’s Small Business Council and the development of the COVID-19 Small Business Economic Support Fund. The City’s program will be designed to reach those that have missed other funding sources. The City has developed an emergency relief program, funded by the Federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act from the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Community Development Block Grant Program. Small businesses that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 will have the opportunity to apply as soon as the details have been completed.

The City worked quickly to provide the support that benefits the small businesses that are the backbone of our economy. Mayor Joe Smith held the first meeting with his small business council Monday, May 11, 2020. The council members advised the Mayor on several topics during the reopening

process, including the details of the Economic Support Fund and guidance to assist small businesses in navigating the available state and federal assistance programs that may help them more. Due to the guidelines from HUD, the process has been slower than we would like, but the work continues, and the funds are still available. You can apply for the loan/grant at the *COVID-19 Small Business Economic Support Fund* section of nlr.ar.gov/news.

Many businesses learned to pivot. Restaurants turned to curbside pickup and outdoor dining. The Argenta Outdoor Dining district became a North Little Rock hot spot with restaurants working together to provide a unique experience for residents. Starting with FlyAway Brewery's Tent City idea, it spread throughout the newly formed entertainment district to provide an opportunity for outdoor dining with live entertainment. A new restaurant even opened and thrived during this summer in Brood and Barley. But it was not just downtown; Mayor Smith and the city council opened outdoor dining citywide.

Drive-through and curbside service helped our over 200 restaurants continue to operate.

Other businesses opened back up slowly as Gov. Hutchinson lifted restrictions.



Life started to adapt to the “New Normal.” Many businesses adapted to working from home. Retail stores adapted to curbside pickup and limiting the number of patrons in stores. Our City is resilient and adaptive, and that is what it has taken to keep our lives and our economy going. The City of North Little Rock followed the Governors directive's as far as closures and mask ordinances. “In a time of crisis, you need to follow one leader, so the Governor took that lead, and we followed. We adapted to what fit North Little Rock and what we legally could do to protect our citizens,” said Mayor Smith. We will continue to work for our small business partners in the City by providing up-to-date resources on our website and social media.

Major Announcements

The year started with a bang and things haven't slowed down. We began 2020 with First Orion moving into their new headquarters located in the heart of Argenta. The four-story modern office is the centerpiece of the Sixth Street Downtown Project.

First Orion will house close to 300 employees in their national headquarters. First Orion helps the world's leading carriers, enterprises, and mobile apps provide mobile users with the protection they need from scams and the identity verification they need to answer trusted calls. The company's flagship First Orion Call Protection Suite currently provides call control, blocking, transparency, and management solutions to tens of millions of mobile handsets. Processing over 90 billion calls annually, First Orion powers communication transparency solutions for T-Mobile, Metro by T-Mobile, Boost Mobile, Sky, Virgin Mobile, and Sprint Prepaid mobile networks along with PrivacyStar and other mobile apps. Established in 2008 and led by Charles Morgan (former Founder & CEO of Acxiom), First Orion is headquartered in North Little Rock, Arkansas, has offices in Seattle, London, and Dubai, and employs nearly 250 people globally.

Right next to First Orion is the 600 Main building.





This three-story building houses the NLR Convention and Visitor's Bureau on the first floor, the Arkansas Automobile Dealers Association on the second floor, and Taggart Architects on the third floor.

Taggart was the lead designer for both buildings and the local design team for the Argenta Plaza. The three businesses house around 80 jobs in their new building.

Medical

The completion of the CARTI facility in North Little Rock is another exciting project that opened in 2020. CARTI North Little Rock will offer comprehensive cancer treatment services in one convenient location, enhancing treatment, care, and accessibility for patients. In addition to having a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility, CARTI NLR patients will receive the most innovative and personalized cancer treatment available, with comfort and convenience.

Features of the new facility include a two-story, 24,000-square-foot center with fully-integrated cancer care services for medical and radiation oncology, as well as diagnostic imaging; an expansive and sunlit infusion area to create a more relaxing and healing atmosphere, with plenty of room for

caregivers and families; heated infusion chairs; easier access, and parking for patients, Varian Linear accelerator; PET/CT; Low Dose CT scanner.

"Providing the most innovative treatment and leading-edge technology coupled with personalized, compassionate care to our patients are our highest priorities," said Adam Head, President and Chief Executive Officer of the statewide network of cancer care providers. "Our new North Little Rock facility will deliver an exceptional treatment experience for all our patients."

Baptist Health officially dedicated its new Baptist Health Medical Office Building on Monday, January 13, in North Little Rock. Governor Asa Hutchinson and Mayor Joe Smith were on hand to help Baptist Health President and CEO Troy Wells and other local dignitaries cut the ribbon on the four-story 160,000-square-foot building, which houses the Baptist Health-University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Medical Education Program.

The Baptist Health-UAMS Medical Education Program is a joint venture with UAMS that started with 24 residents in the specialties of family medicine and internal medicine with plans to expand and ultimately provide up to 120 or more new residency opportunities in the state.

"By working together, Baptist Health and UAMS will dramatically impact the number of residency opportunities available in our state," said Troy Wells, President and CEO of Baptist Health. "We know that when physicians train in a certain community, they are much more likely to stay there after their training. The goal is more physicians for the state, which has a significant physician shortage."





Hum's Hardware on East Broadway.

**Industrial/
Transportation**

Koppers, Inc

Koppers, a global provider of treated wood products, announced that it plans to invest a minimum of \$23 million and increase the number of workers at its North Little Rock facility over the next two years.

The investment will be used for new construction, to purchase equipment that will allow Koppers to upgrade and modernize its processes, and further improve its environmental footprint.

“When Koppers had the opportunity to invest in the future, we chose the dedicated workforce and exceptional community of North Little Rock,” said Chris Martin, plant manager of Koppers North Little Rock. “This is a place where people work hard, and we support each other.”

The company cited support from the state, Pulaski County, and the City of North Little Rock among the reasons for its decision to expand at the North Little Rock site.

“I am very pleased by Koppers’ decision to grow its business in

Arkansas,” Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. “The North Little Rock facility has been an establishment for more than a century, and we are grateful that the company has chosen to continue this legacy by investing millions into the site. I am confident that the company’s entrepreneurship, combined with our pro-business environment, will contribute to the continued success of Koppers in Arkansas.”

“Koppers has been a reliable contributor to Arkansas’s economy for decades,” said Secretary of Commerce

and Executive Director of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) Mike Preston. “Koppers directly serves one of the most prominent railroads in the state and sources many of its materials from timber production sites across the state. I appreciate Koppers’ continued investment in Arkansas.”

“I’m proud of the economic development team’s efforts on Koppers’ expansion,” Pulaski County Judge Barry Hyde said. “Koppers has been a good member of the business



Koppers, Inc. rededication.



Future Amazon site.

community here for years. They care about their people, and they care about the community.”

“On behalf of a grateful community, I want to thank the Koppers management and board of directors for their decision to remain and expand in North Little Rock,” North Little Rock Mayor Joe Smith said. “Just a short time ago, it didn’t seem as though this would be the outcome. But an aggressive and effective rapid response by our state and local economic development team, as well as this facility’s fantastic employees, made it happen. Finally, I sincerely appreciate Governor Hutchinson’s support and involvement.”

Koppers has been a part of the Central Arkansas community for more than 30 years. The North Little Rock facility, built in 1907, sits on 157 acres and currently employs approximately 80 people. The plant processes and treats more than 1.5 million wooden railroad crossties each year. The plant also produces switch ties, road crossings, and framed bridge timbers.

Old Dominion’s New Hub

To better serve the Gulf Coast region and to strategically place another service center along with the line haul network, Old Dominion built the North Little Rock service center with 63 doors, with space to add 36 more doors if needed. This service center sits on 18 acres. With 49 employees, it has the capacity for tremendous growth.

“Our long-term strategic plan includes continual investment in our network to improve efficiencies and increase capacity so when our customers grow; we can serve them,” Old Dominion’s Terry Hutchins, vice president of real estate, said in a statement announcing the openings. “The end goal of helping our customers keep their promises is solidified by our continued investment in new technology and service center expansion.”

Oakley Trucking

Starting with one dump truck purchased in 1968, Bruce Oakley began making a 75-mile trip from El Paso to Batesville, Arkansas, where he bought lime after recognizing a need for farmers in the area to fertilize their fields. Soon the company grew to a facility in Beebe to take advantage of the rail service. When the company’s sales outgrew Beebe’s rail service, Oakley looked to the Arkansas River system to meet demand. And in 1977 (shortly after the completion of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System), he bought the 20-acre site in North Little Rock beside the Arkansas River where Oakley’s headquarters is located today.

Bruce Oakley, Inc is a diverse commodity trading, distribution, and transportation company. Their vertically integrated transportation system allows them to provide excellent service to an extensive customer base. They have suppliers and customers all over the world and can connect them in the most efficient ways. Their knowledge,

experience, and global network support their operations and serve their customers better.

In 2020, Bruce Oakley opened a new 22,000 sq ft head quarters under the leadership of Dennis Oakley based right here in North Little Rock on Gribble Street off East Broadway. They recently purchased the Buckeye Street facility and are currently remodeling the facility to expand its rail capacity for their operations. Oakley ships products worldwide, proving that you can do worldwide business from North Little Rock.

Amazon

We started 2020 off with a bang announcing the 300 plus jobs being brought to downtown North Little Rock with First Orion, Taggart Architects, The Arkansas Automobile Association, and The North Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau in the Argenta Plaza. Now we get to end the year with one of the largest announcements to hit North Little Rock in the construction of the one-million-square-foot distribution center being built off the Galloway Exit on Highway 70. This facility will house anywhere from 500 to 1000 jobs initially, with more growth to come. The official announcement will arrive before the end of the year and be a wonderful capstone project for Mayor Joe Smith.

Community Development

The City of North Little Rock applies annually for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG Program provides federal grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities, principally for the benefit of low and moderate-income residents.

Safe and accessible infrastructure is essential to supporting community stability. The City of North Little Rock has utilized its CDBG funds to invest in street, drainage, and sidewalk improvements in lower-income neighborhoods. These projects alleviate flooding and stormwater pool in yards, driveways, and roads during heavy rains to improve conditions for residents, drivers, and pedestrians. Economic challenges demand resourceful uses of limited funding. Whenever possible, City staff and Council Members coordinate efforts by jointly funding projects with CDBG funds and Sales Tax Capital Improvement funds.

The City allocated a total of \$1,140,826 in CDBG funding to the following activities:

- ◆ Ward I - Marion Street from 15th to 18th Street: Improvements on two blocks were completed in 2019. Construction on the final block is ongoing.
- ◆ Ward II - 9th Street from G to I Street: Work on this two-block project in the Dixie area is currently underway.
- ◆ Ward III - 50th Street from Camp Robinson to Allen Street: Construction on this extensive four-block project began mid-year and is nearing completion.


CDBG funds have also been used to provide vital public services to assist low- to moderate-income residents. This year, the City allocated over \$65,000 towards North Little Rock Boys and Girls Club programs

for youth, the CareLink Meals on Wheels program for homebound senior citizens, and River City Ministry's medical clinic services for the homeless.

Annual applications are also submitted for HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships program, which is a federal block grant designed to create affordable housing. Through collaboration with the City, an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity of Central Arkansas acquires and develops properties and then provides zero-interest, thirty-year mortgages to qualified low-income buyers who might not otherwise be able to realize their dream of homeownership. Utilizing over \$285,000 in HOME funds, one new energy-efficient home was constructed and sold to a first-time homebuyer in June. Work on another home is underway for a homeowner hoping to move in around the end of the year!

Another example of what can be accomplished through strong community partnerships and pooled resources is Habitat for Humanity of Central Arkansas's recently completed pocket neighborhood. Habitat acquired the



vacant North Heights Elementary School from the City. It worked with the Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) to obtain a combination of HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and HOME funding to demolish the school building, install the needed City infrastructure, and new cul-de-sac and construct nine new affordable homes for low-income homebuyers. The City provided engineering fees and oversight. Several Habitat partners, sponsors, and volunteers also contributed dollars, time, and efforts. The federal grant funding for the overall project topped \$1 million with over \$250,000 invested in the new City street. 



NLRPROUD Projects Update

Safer Homes. Better Streets. Prouder City!

2019 Street Restoration

(Asphalt Overlay and Inlay, Concrete Paving) Projects (Project Complete): Project Costs - \$1,298,870.26

CITY - 2019 Streets Restoration Program Fund

- ◆ N. Broadway (Willow to W. Broadway, WARD 2)
- ◆ W. Military (MacArthur to the west edge of Joe K. Poch Intersection, WARD 3)
- ◆ Landski (MacArthur to Parkway, WARD 3)
- ◆ Crestwood (North Hills to Fairway, WARD 4)

WARD 1 - 2019 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ Idlewild (Goshen to H)
- ◆ East D (JFK to Cedar)
- ◆ W. 33rd (33rd Place to Sycamore)
- ◆ 44th (Camp Robinson to Maple)
- ◆ Curtis Sykes (Main to 110' East of N. Olive)
- ◆ Richards (McCain to 500' beyond Stockton)
- ◆ Walnut (13th to 14th)
- ◆ Randolph (McCain to Fairway)
- ◆ Chandler (46th to 47th)

WARD 2 - 2019 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ E. Washington (Locust to Riverfront)
- ◆ E. 4th (Poplar to Main)
- ◆ E. 4th (Magnolia to Olive)
- ◆ Riverfront Place (Riverfront Dr. To N. Main St. Bridge)
- ◆ Maple (Broadway to Riverfront)

WARD 3 - 2019 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ White Oak Crossing (Commerce Cove to Rich Smith Lane)
- ◆ Foxboro (Nicole to Green Valley)
- ◆ Scenic (W. Pershing to JD Ashley Lane)

WARD 4 - 2019 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ Somers (Dawson to Warden)
- ◆ N. Locust (Allwood to 57th)
- ◆ Westfield (Greenbank to Meadowbrook)
- ◆ Meadowbrook (Westfield to Tanglewood)

2020 Street Restoration

(Asphalt Overlay and Inlay, Concrete Paving) Projects (Under Contract): Anticipated Project Costs - \$1,027,639.38
(Note: Additional Streets may be Added Based on Available Funding)

CITY - 2020 Streets Restoration Program Fund

- ◆ Waterside (North Hills to Idlewild, WARD 1)
- ◆ Campbell (Lynch to Baucum Pike, WARD 2)
- ◆ N. Smothers (5th to approx. 55' South of 4th, WARD 2)
- ◆ Charles H. Boyer (Military to MacArthur, WARD 3)
- ◆ Fairway Avenue Concrete Pavement Rehabilitation (Crestwood to Somers, WARD 4)

WARD 1 - 2020 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ Lakeview (McCain to Hazelwood)
- ◆ Lakeview (Barbara to North Hills)
- ◆ North Hills (Barbara to I-40 Ramp)

WARD 2 - 2020 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ Dixie (Broadway to Sam Evans)
- ◆ E. Bethany (Eureka Gardens to Village Drive)
- ◆ Eureka Gardens (I-40 to Hwy. 70)

- ◆ N. Palm (E. Washington to Broadway)
- ◆ Old Hwy. 30 (Hwy.165 to 600' East on Old Hwy. 30)

WARD 3 - 2020 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ Bridgeway (Betts to I-430 Bridge)

WARD 4 - 2020 (2017 Sales Tax)

- ◆ Batesville Pike (Asphalt patch repairs)

Current List of Sales Tax Completed/On-Going Projects by WARD for 2020/21

WARD 1

- ◆ Marion Street & Drainage Improvements 15th to 16th (Support & Coordination with CDBG)

- ◆ Marion Street & Drainage Improvements 34th to 35th (2021 Action Plan, Support & Coordination with CDBG)
- ◆ West B/West A Drainage Improvements (Between N. Magnolia and N. Poplar)
- ◆ West D Avenue - Street & Drainage Improvements
- ◆ Military Heights Floodplain Evaluation
- ◆ North Walnut Street Restoration (15th to 17th)
- ◆ 4408-4418 Randolph Alley – Icon Apartments Drainage Investigation (Coordination with NLRWW)
- ◆ 24th and Popular Street and Drainage Improvements
- ◆ Main Street Drainage Improvements near Police Administration Building
- ◆ McCain Blvd. near North Hills Raised Median Island Rehabilitation (Split between WARD 1 & 4)

WARD 2

- ◆ 9th Street and Drainage Improvements (Support & Coordination with CDBG)
- ◆ Park Place Street and Drainage Improvements (2020/2021 Action Plan, Support & Coordination with CDBG)
- ◆ 10th Street and Drainage Improvements (Dixie Addition) [Future CDBG Project]
- ◆ 7th Street Drainage and Streetscape Improvements (Between Willow and Maple). Based on Field Condition, Approx. \$120,000 City Drainage Project was added to the Project.
- ◆ Cypress Crossing Ditch Maintenance at Ditch #1 and #2
- ◆ Cypress Crossing ADA Handicap Ramps
- ◆ North Palm Street and Drainage Improvements
- ◆ Emergency Fire Department Signal along State Hwy. 165
- ◆ Signal Investigation at State Hwy. 165 and State Hwy. 391
- ◆ Redwood Ditch: Bank Stabilization from 2019 Arkansas River Flood
- ◆ Parkdale Bank Stabilization
- ◆ Delta Lawn Drainage Improvement Plans

WARD 3

- ◆ 50th Street and Drainage Design Camp Robinson to Allen (Support & Coordination with CDBG)
- ◆ 49th Street and Drainage Improvements Pike to Division (2021 Action Plan, Support & Coordination with CDBG)
- ◆ Shilcotts Bayou Maintenance Drainage Improvements
- ◆ Pike Avenue and West 39th Street & Drainage Improvements (Support & Coordination with Fire Department)
- ◆ Al Joy Properties, LLC – Driveway/Bridge Entrance off Pike (Street and Drainage Improvement Investigation).
- ◆ 47th Street and Drainage Improvements Phase 1 (Camp Robinson to Pike) – Phase I Design Complete.
- ◆ 47th Street and Drainage Improvements Phase 1 (Pike to Division) - Phase I Design Complete.
- ◆ Shilcotts Bayou Bank Stabilization
- ◆ 401 East Military – Drainage Easement Investigation

WARD 4

- ◆ Osage/Mission Street Improvements
- ◆ Remount near Kierre Drainage Improvements
- ◆ Fairway Avenue Concrete Pavement Rehabilitation (Crestwood to Somers)
- ◆ Timber Creek Drainage Improvements
- ◆ Intersection Remount and Kierre Street and Drainage Improvements.
- ◆ 4901-4905 Hickory Drainage Investigation/Improvements
- ◆ Shilcott Drainage Channel Fencing at Camp Robinson/Latona
- ◆ McCain Blvd. near North Hills Raised Median Island Rehabilitation (Split between WARD 1 & 4)
- ◆ St. Anne's Church Safety & Drainage Improvements (Remount and Camp Robinson)
- ◆ Big Lots Maintenance Drainage Improvements.

FHWA/MetroPlan

- ◆ Job 061554, Levy Community Jump Start Impvts. (NLR) (S) \$434,639 Federal Funds Available (FFA), \$108,660 Local City Match (LCM) (Design)
- ◆ Job 061554, Levy Community Jump Start Impvts. (NLR) (S) \$1,650,000 FFA, \$412,500 LCM (Construction)
- ◆ Job 061553, Park Hill Community Jump Start Impvts. (NLR) (S) \$396,888 FFA, \$99,223 LCM (Design)
- ◆ Job 061553, Park Hill Community Jump Start Impvts. (NLR) (S) \$2,350,000 FFA, \$585,500 LCM (Construction)
- ◆ Job 061551, Pike Ave. Bike/Ped. Impvts. (NLR) (S) \$179,103 FFA, \$44,776 LCM (Design)
- ◆ Job 061551, Pike Ave. Bike/Ped. Impvts. (NLR) (S) \$260,000 FFA, \$65,000 LCM (Construction)
- ◆ Job 061700, Argenta Plaza Streetscaping (NLR) (S) \$140,000 FFA, \$112,000 LCM

TOTAL of Grants Awarded = \$5,410,630

FHWA/ArDOT

- ◆ Job 061477-Levy Trail Phase 3 \$313,696 FFA, \$78,424 LCM **Note: Project Complete/Closed Out Early 2020**
- ◆ Job 061540, NLR Bishop Lindsey Streetscape (TAP-16) (S) \$713,000 FFA, \$178,250 LCM **Note: Federal Funds needed for the Project is \$425,867.12. Project Near Complete**
- ◆ Job 061636, North Little Rock 14th St. Ped. Bridge (TAP-19) (S) \$470,000 FFA, \$117,500 LCM
- ◆ Job 061492 - SRTS TAP Project (Boone and Amboy Elementary) \$150,000 FFA, \$37,500 LCM
- ◆ RTP Motorized Ott Park Off-Road Trail Impvts. \$105,000 FFA, \$26,250 LCM

TOTAL of Grants Awarded = \$1,751,696

Federally Funded Projects are difficult to assign to any One Year. 

Eight Prosperous Years of City Leadership Mayor Joe A. Smith



On January 1st, our city will inaugurate a new Mayor. No one will mind or begrudge me if I slip quietly out the back door and start my retired life, enjoying time with family and golf carts instead of holding budget hearings and solving issues that inevitably occur. Leaving office without fanfare suits me. No one *needs* my retrospective. But at the very heart of what makes our city great, why our city departments are so good at their job and our residents so informed and caring, is the dedication to doing more than the minimum required. I did not have to write this – and you do not have to read it – but in North Little Rock, we go above and beyond.

For eight years, we have governed, dedicated to the betterment of our city. We have faced obstacles, both ordinary and unique. We have solved the problems. We have brought people together. And we have made some mistakes – everyone does. We have always asked these crucial questions: What have we learned? How can we do better? What did we get correct?





Looking back is a path to understanding, and we could all use more understanding. If we want to repeat our successes, it is essential to recognize and remember them.

Diversity of Perspective

We are blessed with plenty of public servants who sacrifice their time to serve on our commissions for zero compensation and an array of public criticism. The decisions they make are

not always popular, but they always have our city's best interests at heart. They are good at what they do. Over years of service, many of them have built up a vast institutional knowledge that helps make our city run smoothly. It is easier to spot a potential headache or problem if you have faced a similar issue before.

But relying on the same individuals to serve because of their valuable

experience can have the unintended effect of depriving our next generation of precisely that same experience. I was proud to pass resolutions during my term in office that dedicated our Council to encourage a younger generation of our residents to get involved in our government. Our Council Members have responded by offering candidates for commissions that are new to the process but eager to begin their service. Our next generation of leaders brings a valuable perspective to our deliberations, and I continue to encourage their participation.

Economic Development

Jobs, jobs, jobs. If there is nowhere to work, people will leave. It is that simple. North Little Rock has been at the forefront of attracting and retaining great businesses for our city and our residents' jobs. Amazon, First Orion, and Ben E. Keith are just a few of the big names that we worked hard on finding a place for in our community. We added more than 3,000 good, high-paying jobs in the past eight years.

But for every significant groundbreaking, there are projects that do not make it. Some never make it past the rumor phase. Others are



heartbreakingly lost at the last minute after years of persistent struggle.

Economic development is not a simple matter of crossing your fingers. As our Development Department loves to say, “It’s not a sprint, it’s a marathon.” Every single day, our administration works to make something happen. If you let off the gas, even for a short time, you fall behind the other cities that are out there, showcasing their communities.

Companies have wish lists that go far beyond tax breaks or location requirements. They are looking for cities that will provide excellent quality of life for their employees. The next generation of workers wants things to do, good schools, low crime, and better roads. Everything we do as a city is tied

to our future economic development prospects.

Speaking of economic development, our downtown is becoming a beacon for new tech jobs and to the younger generation of workers who are attracted to unique, exciting, and vibrant things to do. The Argenta Plaza is becoming the hottest place in Arkansas to visit and hold events. And it belongs to everyone in North Little Rock. Our downtown is the front porch of our city – often the only sense of our town that visitors get to experience – and our curb appeal is off the charts! Not to mention our world-class Burns Park, River Trails, and various Parks and Recreation amenities throughout our wonderful communities.

Public Safety

A growing, healthy city begins and ends with public safety. It is the foundation upon which our residents feel safe, our businesses are confident, and visitors have great experiences. Our police, fire, and emergency services departments are among the best trained in the state. Making them even better was a priority for our administration.

Even before the additional one-cent sales tax in 2017, we began a multi-year schedule to replace and upgrade our fire trucks. We worked hard on the budget and prioritized raises for both police and fire departments. Over the past eight years, we added nine new fire apparatus with one more coming in December of this year. With the additional sales tax’s financial security, we began upgrading or outright replacing our fire stations. Six of the 11 fire stations have had improvements. We are building a brand new Station 6 and Station 8. The design, groundbreaking, and near completion of North Little Rock’s new Justice Center will replace an outdated and far-too-small building. Our new facility will incorporate our entire Police and Courts divisions, including training for Police and Fire departments, Information Technology (IT), Community Room, and Emergency Operations Center.

The week before I took office, our city suffered a crippling snowstorm that knocked out power to many of our residents for days. It highlighted the critical importance that all of our employees play in your local government’s role during an emergency. Everyone from the electric lineman working in the cold at night to get our lights back on to the street department worker clearing downed trees so ambulances could find their way played a significant role in our disaster response. We pledged that we would get better and more efficient when the next disaster struck. We have.

The administration spent the first few years setting up an emergency response center. We brought together the department heads, other local and state



CEO Jimmy Alessi, Danny Bradley, Mayor Joe Smith, and Alessi President Bob Butler.





Mayor Joe Smith, and Governor Asa Hutchinson at Baptist Health.

agencies, and community partners. We practiced, drilled, and reviewed. We all learned new skills, and our procedures and teamwork have become sharp.

When the floodwaters rose last spring, we were ready. Our communication with residents was top notch. The technology we invested in, such as drones, generators, heavy equipment, paid off. Our legal and bureaucratic training meant better record keeping, which in turn meant easier reimbursement from FEMA. A government is rightly judged by its response to a community in a time of need. I am proud of our employees and am confident we passed the test thanks to excellent preparation.

Financial Security

Public trust. Without it, a local government – any government – has nothing. The responsible, efficient, and prudent care of the taxpayers’ dollars is paramount to our community’s success. We recognized this before we even took office and made it central to our administration.

Eight years ago, we began ensuring every dollar spent, every position created or deleted, was done with absolute certainty. The result was critical to the efficient, competent operation of city services. Reducing our debt, balancing

our budget, and finding a way to strengthen our financial future was priority number 1, 1A, and 1B. We watched every dollar and planned for the long-term.

Once we streamlined our services and significantly reduced our debt, we felt confident in asking our residents to approve our plan for a healthy financial future for our city, in the form of a one-cent sales tax increase. Half of the cent was for general revenues, ensuring our budget would handle future pay raises for our professional employees and allow us to continue providing services at a level that our residents expect. The other half-cent is dedicated to capital projects like the fire station upgrades and replacements, the new Justice Center construction, and critical street and drainage maintenance.

I cannot emphasize enough how critical it is for a city to be financially healthy. Recessions happen, health care costs increase, disasters strike, and significant economic development project opportunities can happen at any time. A city needs the financial flexibility to handle all of these without straining and sacrificing the day-to-day services provided to residents. It took eight years, but with the trust of our



Covid Briefing with Dr. Brad Jenkins



Mayor Smith's initial announcement of the Argenta Plaza.

residents, all the streamlining, debt-reduction, and long-term planning has built our reserve fund up to a responsible, secure level – the envy of many surrounding cities.

Infrastructure

If the streets of a city are in disrepair, crumbling under the weight of a struggling government to provide a basic service to the people, the perception of residents, businesses, and visitors can become depressed. Well-maintained streets and drainage projects are critical to keeping our city moving. Our first budget priority was to increase the amount spent on streets and drainage tenfold.

Since that first year in office, we have increased our funding by 400 percent, with each ward getting more than a half-million dollars of investment in street improvements – each year!

Good People

If you want to be the best, then hire the best – and then have them argue with you. I am blessed to have an amazing staff, department heads, and employees that remain critical to our city's success. Of course, we have had disagreements, but their perspective and honesty have helped me develop my thought process and ultimately contributed to every one of our accomplishments.

It is rare to have a chief of staff for longer than a few years. Some

presidents go through three or four a term. That is why I am incredibly grateful to Danny Bradley for his past eight years of service in the office next to mine. His professionalism, insight, and determined work ethic has undoubtedly made the office of your Mayor exponentially better. He has been a trusted confidant, sounding board, and friend for many years and deserves his expected retirement more than anyone, though North Little Rock will lose a valuable public servant. Along with Danny, I have been blessed to have department heads and city employees that have served the city

with professionalism, knowledge, and loyalty. I am forever grateful.

Without any hesitation, North Little Rock can claim the best City Council in the state. They take their jobs as leaders of our city seriously, engaging in the budget, every project, and steering us in the right direction. Some may have disagreements, but every single one of our Council Members is focused on doing what is best for our city and know-how to discuss, compromise, and come to the best solution, putting irrelevant differences aside. Such a rare occurrence makes North Little Rock the envy of communities across the nation.



Danny Bradley during a Topping Ceremony.



Mayor and Missie Smith with their grandchildren: Sydney and Kate. Tom Brown, driver.

My job is immeasurably easier because I have a foundation of love and support generously and patiently given by my wife, Missie. For many years, she has been more than a mother, wife, educator, and the first lady of North Little Rock. She is and has been my best friend...my everything. Missie took on a role she did not ask for and, with grace, grit, and style, helped make North Little Rock and me look and be better.


Thank you, North Little Rock, for allowing me to serve you for the past 30 years. It has been an honor for Missie and me to serve you.



Uiwang City, South Korea Mayor Kim Sangdon and Mayor Smith share a laugh.



Transition

My administration's last duty is putting together the necessary materials to ensure that the next administration can hit the ground running. We will have playbooks, updates, and briefing materials for all departments, budgets, and projects ready and waiting when the new administration walks through the front doors of our City Hall. I sincerely wish the next Mayor all the best and encourage all North Little Rock residents to help him in the challenging but rewarding task of leading our proud city for the next four years. 




National Night Out

Argenta Mural Project

Spearheaded by local businessman John Gaudin, the Argenta Mural Project has brought new color and life to downtown North Little Rock. Fifteen local visual artists who participated were asked to join an artist cooperative to design and implement murals in the Historic Argenta Arts District.

To date, seven artists all from Central Arkansas have participated in 2020.

The first completed mural was done by Nancy Jordan on the Diamond Bear Brewery at 600 N. Broadway in NLR. Robin Tucker completed three murals – birds in flight on Flyway Brewing, an “ideas” mural with robotic honey bees at the Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub, and a third in collaboration with Meikel Church called “The Gift” in the alley behind Blake’s Furniture. Perrion Y. Hurd installed colorful panels depicting jazz musicians on 4th and 5th Streets. Nancy Griffey Jordan debuted a gorgeous blue bear mural at Diamond Bear Brewing Co, and Kevin Kresse did the Big Dam Bridge 100 Mural at 700 Main for Custom XM.

Kevin Kresse is completing the Dogtown Proud Mural at 400 Main St. Jessica Jones did the Fox Mural on Broadway. Emily Wood has been commissioned to do the Hero’s mural in the alley behind 413 Main St. More is coming, and it couldn’t come at a better time. While everyone is looking for fun, outdoor things to do, the murals provide a fun backdrop for photo shoots and are part of the North Little Rock Scavenger Hunt, organized by the North Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau. A downloadable map is available at northlittlerock.org. 





Argenta Plaza—North Little Rock's Front Porch



A year after the successful Northern Lights Festival that marked the grand opening of Argenta Plaza, the modern public space is now a popular spot for enjoying food and drinks from downtown restaurants, meeting friends and family, commercial photo shoots, and private events. Though there will be no holiday festival this year, the North Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau will still bring some holiday spirit to Argenta Plaza. The 38-foot Christmas tree decked in ornaments will be lit nightly through the first week of January. The plaza itself is lit every night with multicolor lights that cast colorful shadows and lights in the “front porch” section. The water features, including the fountains in the center and the water wall in front of First Orion, will be on daily if the temperature doesn’t dip below freezing. Plans are for music to play regularly at Argenta Plaza, especially during lunch and dinner hours. The North Little Rock CVB is building fun playlists based on feedback on social media and a holiday playlist during the winter.

Families are encouraged to come down and enjoy the plaza, take photos with the tree or on the swings, and warm up with meals and drinks from nearby restaurants and coffee shops in the Argenta Outdoor Dining District. For more information about Argenta Plaza, including how to book it for a private event, visit northlittlerock.org/argentaplaza.





North Little Rock Contact Information

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Judge (Traffic)	Judge Randy Morley	791-8562	judy.west@nlrpolice.org
Judge (Criminal/Civil)	Judge Paula Juels Jones	791-8559	vicki.weed@nlrpolice.org
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Emergency dial - 911