

LYON COLLEGE

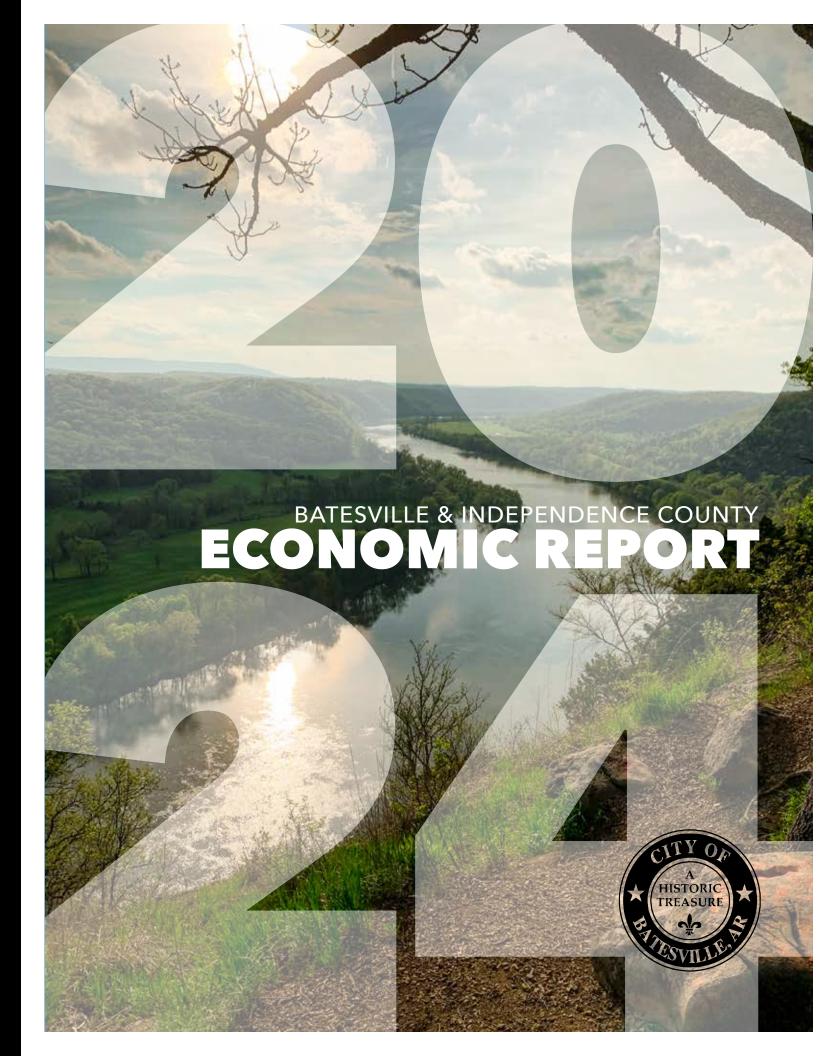
As the state's oldest institution, Lyon College is still operating under its original charter. The college is celebrating 153 years of academic excellence in 2025. A selective, independent learning community affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Lyon is dedicated to providing a rigorous undergraduate education rooted in the liberal arts while also expanding into graduate and professional programs.

Thirty majors, pre-professional programs, and a "design-your-own" major option gives students the flexibility to tailor their education to their passions. Study abroad opportunities, leadership development initiatives, and an outstanding outdoor adventure program further enrich the student experience, encouraging exploration, growth, and service.

Lyon College is making a bold move in healthcare education with the Lyon College Institute of Health Sciences, which includes the Lyon College School of Dental Medicine in Little Rock and the Lyon College School of Veterinary Medicine in Cabot. The dental school, opening in 2025, aims to address critical workforce shortages while providing students with hands-on training opportunities right here in Arkansas. The veterinary school, projected to open in 2026 pending accreditation, will help meet the growing demand for both small- and large-animal veterinarians. The college has also partnered with White River Health in Batesville to launch an RN-to-BSN program, expanding career advancement opportunities for registered nurses and strengthening healthcare services in local communities. New academic programs on the Batesville campus, including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and game development, will debut in fall 2025, positioning Lyon at the forefront of technological innovation.

Lyon College is committed to ensuring that financial barriers don't stand in the way of student success. More than a quarter of its students are the first in their families to attend college; nearly half come from low-income backgrounds; and 86% of Lyon students receive scholarships and financial aid (Pell eligible out of all full-time degree-seekers). Programs like the Lyon Pledge and Backyard Access Plan are making college more accessible than ever, ensuring that students have the support they need to achieve their goals.

As Arkansas's first pet-friendly college, Lyon welcomes students to bring their furry, feathered, or even scaled companions with them to campus. From an on-campus pet park to the annual pet-blessing event, the college fosters a community where students and their pets feel at home. With a deep commitment to education, innovation, and service, Lyon College is preparing students to build a better world–starting right here in Arkansas.



PRESENTING THE 2024 ECONOMIC REPORT



BATESVILLE & INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

Independence County isn't just a great place to visit—it's an even better place to call home. Nestled in the scenic Ozark Mountains, this welcoming community of nearly 38,000 offers breathtaking natural beauty, safe neighborhoods, and a quality of life that stands out.

Top-rated schools, excellent healthcare, and charming neighborhoods create an ideal setting for families. Outdoor enthusiasts will love the endless recreation opportunities, from hiking and fishing along the renowned White River, to simply relaxing in nature.

Our vibrant downtown buzzes year-round, with summer bringing an extra dose of entertainment and cultural events. A strong business climate, diverse economy, and skilled workforce make Independence County a hub for growth, attracting both established companies and new ventures.

Come see for yourself—whether you're seeking outdoor adventures, a friendly community, or exciting business opportunities—Independence County has it all.

Salelloh

Dale Cole

Chairman, President & CEO First Community Bancshares, Inc.

Chairman & CEO First Community Bank Boris Dover

Executive Vice President First Community Bancshares, Inc.

President & COO First Community Bank



Where community comes first.



BATESVILLE & INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

BATESVILLE: A THRIVING COMMUNITY IN THE OZARK FOOTHILLS



Situated in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, Batesville offers small-town charm with a rich cultural scene and a strong economy. Recognized by USA Today as the "Best City to Live in Arkansas," it enjoys a strategic location near major interstates, making it a key stop for travelers. The White River enhances the town's scenic beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities.

MANUFACTURING & INDUSTRY

Independence County boasts a robust manufacturing sector, driving economic growth across various industries:

- LaCroix Precision Optics A global leader in precision optics, operating a 46,250 sq. ft. facility with ISO 9001:2015 certification.
- **Lifeplus International** A global distributor of nutritional supplements, currently undergoing a \$24 million expansion to add 150 jobs.
- **Bad Boy Mowers** Revolutionized zero-turn mowers for homeowners, expanding into tractors, UTVs, and handheld tools under the slogan: Power. Performance. Attitude.
- Flowers Baking Co. of Batesville Arkansas's largest commercial bakery, supplying major retailers and foodservice providers. Recognized for energy efficiency with EPA Energy Star and DOE Better Practice awards.
- FutureFuel Chemical Company Specializes in custom chemical and biodiesel manufacturing. Manufactures products for the painting, carpet, agricultural, laundry and pipeline inductries as well as other custom specialty chemical applications.
- **Independent Stave Company** A key supplier in the bourbon industry, producing barrel staves and heading.
- Intimidator, Inc. (a division of The Toro Company) Produces Spartan® Mowers, eNVy® Neighborhood Vehicles, Bad Dawg Accessories, and more. Awarded Best Industry by the Batesville Daily Guard in 2020.

BUSINESS & TRANSPORTATION

South of town along Highway 167, a growing commercial district features businesses like Mark Martin Automotive, Wood Family Dealerships, Independence County Off-Road, and the local airport.

• Batesville Regional Airport (BVX) - A 375-acre, city-owned general aviation airport with two runways and multiple instrument approaches.

FINANCIAL SECTOR

With seven financial institutions, Independence County's banking sector continues to thrive. First Community Bank, with assets of \$2.97 billion as of December 31, 2024, remains a cornerstone of the local economy.

Batesville's blend of history, industry, and economic vitality makes it a standout community in Arkansas.





BATESVILLE IS LOCATED IN INDEPENDENCE COUNTY, AR.

- 94 MILES NORTH OF LITTLE ROCK
- 121 MILES WEST OF MEMPHIS







INTIMIDATOR, INC.

WHITE RIVER HEALTH



White River Health (WRH) is a cornerstone of health and economic vitality in North Central Arkansas. With two hospitals, 37 clinics and a comprehensive range of services, including Cardiology, Emergency Care, Orthopaedics, Oncology, Women's Health, and more, WRH is dedicated to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care to residents in Independence County and surrounding areas.

Supporting the mission of WRH is the WRH Foundation. Gifts to the Foundation are reinvested into the organization to enhance patient care, upgrade medical technology, expand services, and promote growth in healthcare careers. The WRH Foundation is currently raising funds to create a world-class center of healing and hope for those receiving cancer treatments through infusions.

As a leading employer in the region, WRH takes pride in supporting our local workforce and fostering economic growth. Their team of skilled professionals works tirelessly to ensure that individuals and families have access to the best possible care, right here in our community. Whether it's life-saving emergency treatment, innovative cancer care, or specialized heart health services, they are committed to improving lives every day.

Beyond medical care, their mission extends to building healthier communities through education, outreach, and preventive health initiatives. WRH believes that by investing in wellness and early intervention, we can create a stronger, healthier future for all.

WRH is proud to serve, heal, and grow with our community. Whether you need advanced medical treatment or routine care, they are here to provide compassionate, expert services that make a lasting impact.

For more information about their services, Foundation, and commitment to the region, visit WhiteRiverHealth.org.

White River W HEALTH

Caring Beyond Healthcare

Pictured:

Left: White River Medical Center offers TCAR (Transcarotid Artery Revascularization) for the treatment of Carotid Artery disease. The procedure is considered the safest vascular intervention option and offers patients shorter recovery and quicker return to normal activities.

Center: The WRH Foundation Golf Tournament raised \$114,460 for Cancer Detection and Treatment at White River Health. Pictured Left to Right are Janie Starnes, WRH Foundation Board of Trustees President; Kevin Rose, 2024 Chairman of the WRH Board of Directors; Dale Cole, First Community Bank Chairman and CEO; Dr. Chris Steel, WRH Interim CEO; and Michele VanWinkle, WRH Foundation Executive Director.

Right: Construction on the parking lot for the Oncology and Infusion center kicked off in late 2024.





THIS 2024 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC REPORT DEMONSTRATES THE FISCAL STRENGTH OF BATESVILLE & INDEPENDENCE COUNTY AS IT REFLECTS OUR PROGRESS, ACHIEVEMENTS & PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

WELCOME TO INDEPENDENCE COUNTY - Arkansas's Scenic Treasure!

Established in 1820, Independence County is a place where history, adventure, and small-town charm come together. Whether you're exploring the great outdoors, discovering rich heritage, or indulging in unique local experiences, there's something here for everyone.

NATURE'S PLAYGROUND

The White River winds gracefully through Independence County, offering a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. From world-class trout fishing to kayaking, canoeing, and hiking, the county's lush forests, rugged terrain, and rolling hillsides make it a haven for nature lovers.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN BATESVILLE

Take a stroll down Main Street Batesville, where history meets modern charm. Browse local boutiques, antique shops, and art galleries while admiring the beautifully preserved architecture. With a thriving dining scene and year-round entertainment, downtown Batesville offers something for every visitor.

RECREATION FOR ALL

For those seeking fun and fitness, the Batesville Community Center and Aquatics Park provides state-of-the-art facilities, swimming pools, and sports courts. Golfers can tee off at one of the area's scenic courses. Walking, biking, and hiking trails abound throughout the county's parks and green spaces.

THRILLING MOTORSPORTS

Racing fans won't want to miss Batesville Motor Speedway in Locust Grove. From March through September, Friday nights roar to life with high-energy dirt track racing.

OFF-ROAD ADVENTURES

For ATV and UTV enthusiasts, The Greasy Bend Off-Road Park in Rosie offers over 1,200 acres of thrilling terrain, from muddy trails to scenic river bluffs.

SCENIC GRAVEL ROUTE CYCLING

Cyclists can explore miles of picturesque backroads, winding through rolling hills and tranquil countryside, making Independence County a prime destination for gravel route biking.

FESTIVE DELIGHTS

When the holiday season arrives, Batesville's White River Wonderland transforms Riverside Park into a dazzling Christmas spectacle. With two million twinkling lights, festive music, a Ferris wheel, and holiday treats, it's no wonder Batesville is known as the "Christmas Capital of Arkansas."









BATESVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER & AQUATICS PARK



BATESVILLE MOTOR SPEEDWAY



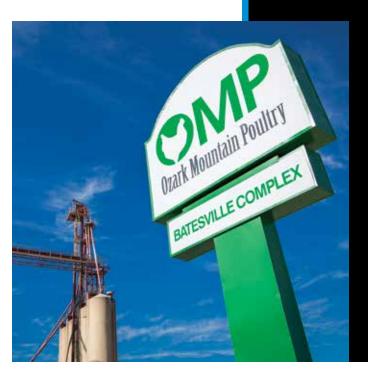


MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

COMPANY	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	BUSINESS TYPE
Peco Foods Inc.	1,211	Poultry Processing
Bad Boy	1,016	Lawn Mowers/Tractors
Ozark Mountain Poultry	1,000	Poultry Processing
Custom Craft Poultry	685	Poultry Processing
FutureFuel Chemical Co.	500	Chemicals/Alternative Fuels
Intimidator Inc./Toro	200	MTVs/Lawn Mowers
Flowers Baking Co. of Batesville	182	Bread
Lifeplus International	163	Nutritional Products
Atlas Asphalt/White River Materials	160	Asphalt/Highway Construction
LaCroix Precision Optics	110	Precision Optical Lenses
Arkansas Lime Co.	80	Lime & Limestone
Independent Stave Company	67	Oak Barrel Staves
TWH Enterprises LLC	34	Manufacturing & Fabricating
Midwest Lime Co.	23	Limestone

NON-MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

COMPANY	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	BUSINESS TYPE
White River Health	1,668	Health Care
First Community Bank	608	Financial Institution
White River Area Agency on Aging	565	Human Services
Batesville Public Schools	534	Education
Walmart Supercenter	383	Retail
Southside Public Schools	369	Education
Network of Community Options	340	Human Services
Arkansas State Highway Department	278	Road/Transportation
UACCB	245	Education
Independence County	205	County Services
Citizens Bank	200	Financial Institution
Lyon College	195	Education
City of Batesville	168	City Services
Sonic Drive-In	162	Restaurant
Colton's Steak House & Grill/Freddy's Frozen Custard & Ste	eakburgers/Popeyes 160	Restaurant
Mountain Meadows Health & Rehab Center	119	Health Care
The Home Depot	113	Building Supplies
McDonald's	102	Restaurant
Bill Davis Trucking/Chimney Rock Cattle	100	Transportation/Cattle
Vital Link	94	Health Care
Northcentral Arkansas Development Council	92	Development Services
Access Arkansas Processing Center	82	Human Services
Wood-Lawn Nursing Home	79	Health Care
Myers-Davis Life Coaching, Inc.	79	Life Coaching
Wade's Heating Air Conditioning & Electric	70	Refrigeration Service & Repair
The River Waterfront Steak & Grill	50	Restaurant
Wood Family Dealerships	49	New & Used Car Dealer
Mark Martin Ford/Kia	46	New & Used Car Dealer
Pepsi Beverages Co.	32	Beverage
Shawn Smith Plumbing	32	Business & Residential Plumbing Services
FARCO	31	General Contractor
White River Planning and Development District	28	Economic Development Services
Econo-Mart Pharmacy	21	Pharmacy
Kallsnick Inc.	20	Food Wholesaler
Arkansas Sheriffs' Youth Ranches	20	Nonprofit
Bryant's Pharmacy and Health Care Center	16	Pharmacy/Home Health Care



AGRICULTURE & POULTRY INDUSTRY IN INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

Agriculture remains the backbone of Independence County's economy, with beef and poultry production leading the way. Poultry processing is a major employer, supporting both the local workforce and the broader Arkansas economy.

- **Peco Foods** One of the nation's largest poultry producers and a top-five operator in Arkansas. With 1,211 employees across two Batesville facilities, Peco processes an impressive 36.5 million pounds of chicken weekly.
- Ozark Mountain Poultry (OMP) Employs over 1,000 residents and has produced more than 5 million pounds of antibiotic-free, non-GMO chicken annually since 1984.
- Custom Craft Poultry (CCP) Specializes in handcrafted, high-quality poultry products, blending traditional and modern processing methods. A recent expansion has solidified CCP's reputation for innovation and customer-focused solutions in the industry.

With these industry leaders, Independence County continues to thrive as a key player in Arkansas's agricultural sector.

THE PRIMARY CROPS GROWN IN INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

ARE CORN, RICE, MILO, SOYBEANS AND WHEAT. CATTLE & POULTRY ARE THE MAIN LIVESTOCK RAISED IN THE AREA.

Sources: Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation and U.S. Department of Agriculture

CROPS, CATTLE & POULTRY

YEAR	ALL CROPS	ALL LIVESTOCK	OTHER FARM INCOME	TOTAL	
2018	\$20,742,961	\$75,141,600	\$9,788,000	\$105,672,561	
2019	\$20,083,448	\$58,396,600	\$9,788,000	\$88,268,048	
2020	\$27,245,551	\$58,879,100	\$9,810,000	\$95,934,651	
2021	\$29,091,489	\$79,862,509	\$11,701,963	\$122,269,890	
2022	\$36,380,000	\$109,979,032	\$12,246,929	\$158,605,961	
Sources: Arkans	as Farm Bureau Federation and l	J.S. Department of Agriculture			

TIMBER REMOVAL BY TONS

2023	PINE	HARDWOOD
INDEPENDENCE COUNTY	56,355	27,905
ARKANSAS	19,166,814	2,654,144
Source: Arkansas Forestry Commission		

VEHICLES REGISTERED IN INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

TYPE OF VEHICLE	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
PERSONAL VEHICLES	44,352	76,453	65,235	76,768	67,528	
Courses Department of Finance and Adm	inistration					

Source: Department of Finance and Administration

PER CAPITA INCOME IN ARKANSAS

COUNTY	2020	2021	2022	2023	
INDEPENDENCE	\$38,266	\$42,120	\$44,216	\$47,318	
SHARP	\$35,612	\$41,025	\$43,728	\$43,491	
CLEBURNE	\$41,656	\$45,289	\$48,466	\$51,355	
WHITE	\$39,598	\$42,743	\$43,574	\$46,269	
LONOKE	\$43,537	\$46,388	\$48,433	\$51,952	
IZARD	\$32,606	\$34,986	\$34,660	\$38,281	
CRITTENDEN	\$41,474	\$45,416	\$44,072	\$47,271	
PULASKI	\$55,563	\$58,583	\$61,575	\$65,851	
CRAIGHEAD	\$40,728	\$45,160	\$46,373	\$49,625	
WASHINGTON	\$43,817	\$47,836	\$48,785	\$51,797	
JEFFERSON	\$39,443	\$42,076	\$40,786	\$43,046	
POINSETT	\$37,307	\$41,551	\$42,536	\$46,750	
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis	•	. ,	. ,	. ,	

RETAIL SALES FOR INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
TOTAL RETAIL SALES (IN MILLIONS)	\$667	\$669	\$788	\$807	\$859	
Source: Independence County Treasurer's	s Office					

LOCAL POPULATION

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	
BATESVILLE	8,263	9,187	9,445	10,248	10,706	
INDEPENDENCE COUNTY	30,147	31,192	34,233	36,647	37,825	
Source: Arkansas Department of Economic	Development					

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
ARKANSAS	6.1%	4.0%	3.6%	3.7%	3.5%	
INDEPENDENCE COUNTY	5.8%	3.9%	2.9%	3.0%	3.2%	
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics						

INDEPENDENCE COUNTY SENIOR CITIZENS PROGRAM

Established in 1974, the Independence County Senior Citizens Program operates four centers in Batesville, Oil Trough, Newark, and Cushman, with Batesville serving as its headquarters. The program provides essential services, including meal delivery, transportation, wellness activities, and social events for area seniors.

A major milestone for the program is the construction of a new senior center in Batesville. While not yet operational as of early 2025, the facility is nearing completion and will allow for expanded services and improved accessibility for the community. The program continues to focus on increasing awareness of aging-related issues, enhancing transportation options, and expanding health and social programs to better serve Independence County seniors.







BANKING DEPOSITS IN INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

YEAR	DEPOSITS
2020	\$1,141,767,000
2021	\$1,170,164,000
2022	\$1,214,676,000
2023	\$1,343,725,000
2024	\$1,433,485,000

Source: FDIC as of June 30 of each year

OLD INDEPENDENCE REGIONAL MUSEUM (OIRM)

Dedicated to preserving over 200 years of local history, OIRM offers 10,000 square feet of interactive exhibits, a robust research archive, and a gift shop filled with unique finds. The museum has been a community favorite for over 25 years.

Recently selected by the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street, OIRM is one of only six museums in the country hosting the acclaimed FOOD exhibit, "A Taste of Community." This engaging display blends Smithsonian resources with local artifacts—showcasing the rich history of food in the region, from Native American agriculture to modern culinary traditions.

Through July 2025, visitors can explore historical cooking techniques, vintage kitchens, and the stories of local businesses that shaped the region's food culture.

Coming Soon: Exploration & Learning Garden

By summer 2025, OIRM will unveil a vibrant Exploration & Learning Garden featuring raised garden beds, interactive geography lessons, and a variety of native plants. Visitors can take part in gardening and cooking classes while learning about sustainable agriculture.

Plan Your Visit

- Open Tuesday Saturday, 9:00 AM 5:00 PM
- Admission: \$5 for adults, \$3 for students & seniors
- Visit www.oirm.org for updates and special events





NATIONAL INFLATION

YEAR INFLATION 2020 1.40% 2021 4.70% 2022 8.00% 2023 4.10% 2024 2.90%

Source: First Community Financial Services

NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT

YEAR	UNEMPLOYMENT	
2020		8.10%
2021	5.30%	
2022	3.60%	
2023	3.70%	
2024	4.00%	

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census of Population

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

YEAR	NATIONAL GDP (IN TRILLIONS)
2020	\$20.93
2021	\$22.99
2022	\$25.46
2023	\$27.36
2024	\$28.18

Source: National Income and Product Account Table, Bureau of Economic Analysis (www.bea.gov)

LOCAL EDUCATION

Education thrives in Independence County, with four exceptional school districts: Batesville (3,123 students), Cedar Ridge (630), Midland (448), and Southside (2,220).

The Batesville School District serves students from infancy through graduation, prioritizing personalized learning and community support. The district's new fine arts facility at the high school is a state-of-theart space designed to support student creativity and performance, featuring a modern theater, dedicated classrooms, and rehearsal areas for choir, orchestra, theatre, and visual art. This facility enhances educational opportunities while also serving as a cultural hub for school and community events.

The Cedar Ridge School District in Newark spans 270 square miles, serving over 600 students from surrounding communities. With 82 students in its state-of-the-art preschool, the district emphasizes safety and early education. Enhanced security measures, dedicated faculty, and strong partnerships with ASU-Newport and UACCB provide students with opportunities to earn associate degrees and industry certifications before graduation.

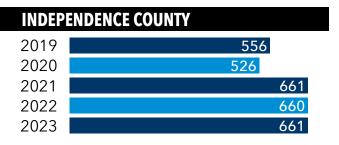
The Midland School District, located along Highway 167, offers a strong academic foundation. Its preschool program serves children from six weeks old to kindergarten readiness. Midland Elementary has ranked among the top in math and reading in the North Central Cooperative for three consecutive years. The district actively engages in Professional Learning Communities to continuously improve teaching and learning.

The Southside School District is committed to academic excellence and student success. Its high school operates as a conversion charter school, offering diverse programs and extracurricular activities. The district is undergoing a major expansion, adding over 170,000 square feet of new facilities, including a cafeteria, band and art rooms, a sports arena, and career and technical education spaces.

Additionally, Batesville is home to three distinguished private schools—Montessori Christian Academy, Presbyterian Day School, and Batesville Montessori School–offering families quality educational choices.

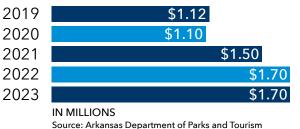


TRAVEL-GENERATED JOBS

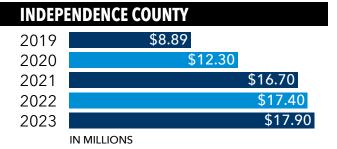


COUNTY TAX RECEIPTS

FOR TOURISM IN INDEPENDENCE COUNTY



TRAVEL-GENERATED PAYROLL



STATE TAX RECEIPTS

FOR TOURISM IN INDEPENDENCE COUNTY

2019		\$2.90	
2020		\$3.40	
2021			\$4.50
2022			\$4.80
2023			\$5.00
	IN MILLIONS		

TOTAL VISITOR SPENDING Source: Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
INDEPENDENCE COUNTY \$45,410,000	\$52,000,000	\$70,800,000	\$75,664,000	\$79,500,000





OUTDOOR RECREATION

Downtown Batesville is home to Maxfield Park, offering scenic views of Poke Bayou, a playground, sculptural artwork, public restrooms, and live music.

For outdoor adventurers, Jamestown Crag, just minutes from town, features Atoka sandstone cliffs with top-tier sport climbing routes, making it a premier destination for climbers.

You can also bring your four-legged friends to play at the Sara Low Memorial Dog Park down by Riverside Park.





UNIVERSITY **OF ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE** AT BATESVILLE





The University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville (UACCB) has been recognized as a leader in education, both locally and nationally. UACCB has been recognized three times by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges. As a major area employer with approximately 245 employees, UACCB adds \$7.1 million in earnings to the local economy.

For the last 25 years, the institution has been a member of the University of Arkansas system building on the strong foundation of educational excellence that is the U of A system.

UACCB embraces a practical approach to education providing a wide variety of associate degrees and technical certifications, constantly adapting to the most in-demand career opportunities of the leading industries in the community and across the state. The college has partnerships with all major four-year institutions in the state, providing a seamless and accessible path to a bachelor's degree through numerous transfer opportunities.

The college recently purchased a 100,000 square foot building sitting on 55 acres located near the main campus. It plans to use the space to expand the college's offerings in agriculture, workforce education, heavy and compact equipment, and CDL licensing training with space for future

Associate degrees include Agriculture Business, Agriculture Technology, Business, Criminal Justice, Elementary Education, General Education, Health Professions, Pre-Engineering, Registered Nursing and STEM. Some of the certifications available through UACCB include certified nursing assistant, practical nursing, welding, machinist, carpentry, masonry, and

As UACCB prepares for the future, its goal remains to provide students with a combination of academic knowledge, technical competencies and professional skills to support our community in economic development and growth.