

CLARKSVILLE BENCHMARK CITIES REPORT



Clarksville Benchmark Cities Report

**This report is part of a larger strategic planning study which was funded
by the
City of Clarksville, Arkansas**

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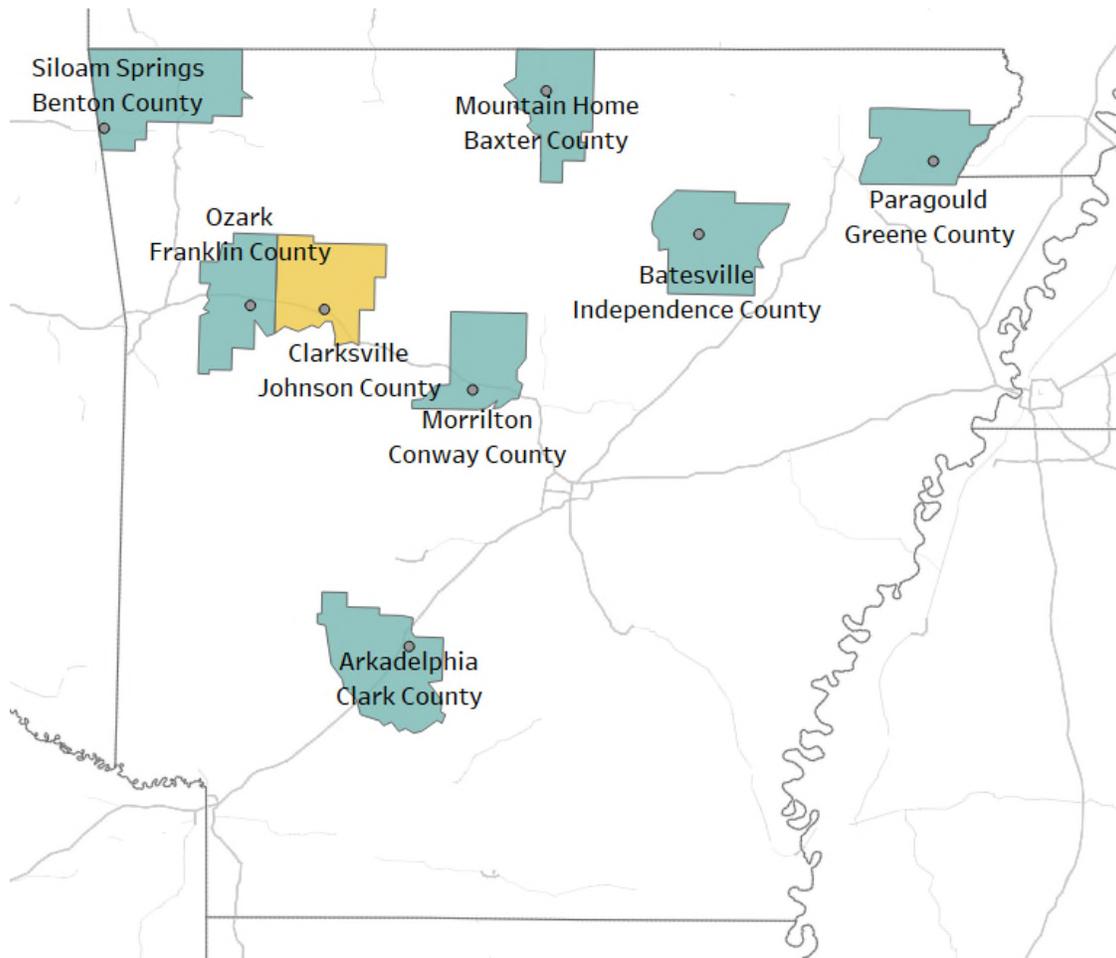
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I. Introduction - Selected Benchmark Cities

Efforts to assist the city of Clarksville develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan for their downtown and the greater Clarksville area include a study of seven benchmark municipalities in Arkansas. These benchmark cities are like Clarksville in many respects and provide insights about community and economic development activities that improve the lives of city and county residents. The seven benchmark cities are Arkadelphia, Batesville, Morrilton, Mountain Home, Ozark, Paragould, and Siloam Springs (Figure 1).¹ Information for this report was obtained from secondary data, websites, and key informants of benchmark cities. Key informants included city, county, chamber of commerce, and economic development personnel.

Figure 1. Benchmarks Cities and Counties



¹ While Siloam Springs was selected as a comparable benchmark city, Benton County, the county in which Siloam Springs is located, has a much larger and more highly education population and different economic base and thus not easily comparable to Johnson County.

II. Selection Criteria

The benchmark cities were chosen based on 12 criteria. The cities with the most similarities to Clarksville, including some with positive recent economic growth, were chosen. The twelve criteria were:

1. Comparable Demographics
2. Home to an institution of higher education
3. Located on or near a major interstate
4. City-owned electric utility provider
5. Recent economic development success
6. Increasing population
7. Increasing local tax base
8. Similar economic base
9. Similar occupations
10. Increasing household income
11. Increasing average earnings per job
12. Leadership

III. Organizational Structure

Local and Regional Collaboration

Several benchmark cities combined economic development efforts among various entities. This happened through coordination of city, county and chamber of commerce economic development activities, combining main street and city economic entities, and implementing economic development strategies at a regional level. These cities reported benefits from that coordination in terms of improved communication and efficiency.

The Batesville Area Economic Development Alliance was created in 2016 to provide a single uniform county-wide organizational structure with both public and private governance and oversight. This organization includes the Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Independence County Economic Development, Inc, and Batesville-Independence County Industrial Development, Inc.

Paragould leaders report strong coordination between the city, the chamber, and main street economic development efforts. The Economic Development Corporation of Paragould was founded in 2003, and the director has been the CEO of the Paragould Chamber of Commerce since then. The Main Street office and the chamber are considered under the same umbrella and work together to identify and implement goals.

The Arkadelphia Regional Economic Development Alliance brings together multiple economic development entities across the county to implement comprehensive economic development strategies laid out in the Clark County Strategic Plan. This strategic plan was created with input from 500 residents over 15 months. This "Alliance" includes nearby chambers of commerce (Amity, Arkadelphia, and Gurdon) as well as the Economic Development Corporation of Clark County and the Clark County Industrial Council. The Clark County Industrial Council owns land in the area and takes the lead on industrial development decisions while the chamber contributes more towards tourism promotion.

Economic Development Goals

Nearly all benchmark cities had specific goals related to improving quality of life for their residents. These goals included improvements to public education, public health, and promoting civic leadership and engagement. Economic prosperity for all residents was also a near-universal goal for the benchmark cities. Economic prosperity goals included adding jobs and improving job quality, business retention and expansion, expanding the tax base and promoting tourism.

Several cities also specified a need for improvements to the community identity or “brand”. Siloam Springs leaders report building community pride and engagement by offering events and programs like farmers markets, historic preservation, and small businesses retention. Mountain Home is initiating a community-wide rebranding effort to help with community development. This initiative involves cross-collaboration among stakeholder groups in the area with a focus on targeted business recruitment and property inventories.

Funding and Governance

Dedicated economic development organizations and chambers of commerce serve as the lead economic development entities in most benchmark cities. Of the communities interviewed, Paragould and Mountain Home reported that their primary economic development entity was funded through community membership dues. Other communities may also be funded this way but did not report. The Economic Development Corporation of Paragould is a non-profit that uses membership dues. The Mountain Home Chamber of Commerce uses both membership dues and event proceeds to finance its operations. The Batesville Area Economic Development Alliance is supported with both public and private funding.

The governance structure of economic development organizations of the benchmark cities varied. In some cities, such as Arkadelphia, the local economic development agency is overseen by a regional umbrella organization. Arkadelphia’s primary economic development entity is the Arkadelphia Regional Economic Development Alliance, which is governed by the board of the Economic Development Corporation of Clark County. In other cities, like Ozark and Siloam Springs, there is no umbrella organization over the local chamber. In these cities, the chamber is run by a small board and coordinates with the local main street organization. The Mountain Home chamber of commerce reports one dedicated staff member for economic development with a director of membership and sales as well as a director of operations.

IV. Demographics

The population of Clarksville and Johnson County in 2019 was approximately the median of the municipalities and counties selected for comparison. However, the population of Clarksville grew faster than all but two benchmark communities (Siloam Springs and Paragould) from 2010 to 2019. This was also true of population growth in Johnson County during this period, which grew faster than all comparison counties, except Benton and Greene counties.

The median age and share of the population 65 and older in Johnson County were near the median of the benchmark counties, but considerably less than Baxter County which has a large elderly population.

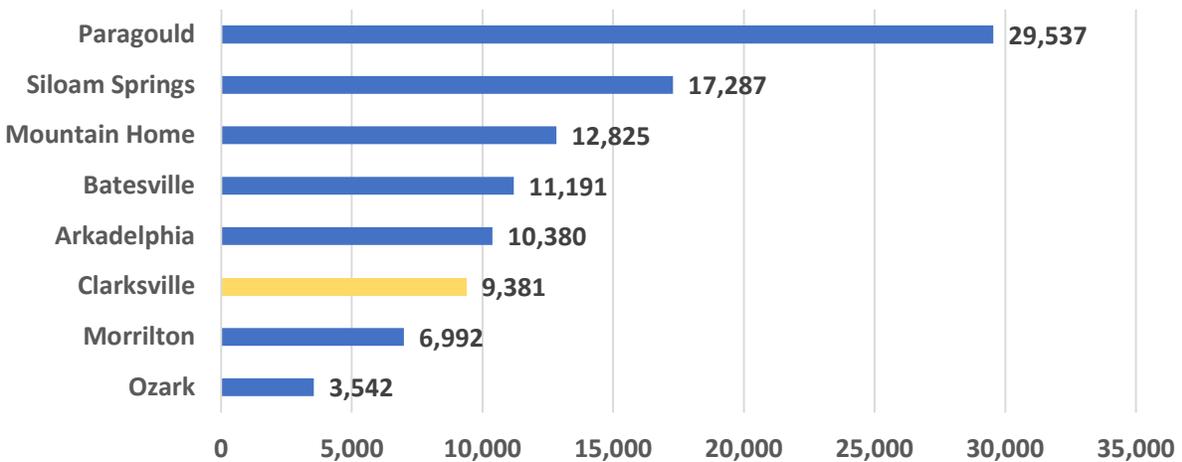
However, Johnson County median household income was less than the seven benchmark counties in 2019.

Population

The City of Clarksville had a population of 9,381 in 2020, which was slightly less than the median of the seven benchmark communities. However, Clarksville’s population was considerably less than the population of Paragould and Siloam Springs, but greater than Ozark and Morrilton. The City of Ozark stands out with the smallest population among the benchmark communities, with only 3,542 residents in 2020 (Figure 2). Conversely, Paragould stands out as having the largest population with 29,537 residents that year.

Figure 2. Population by City 2020

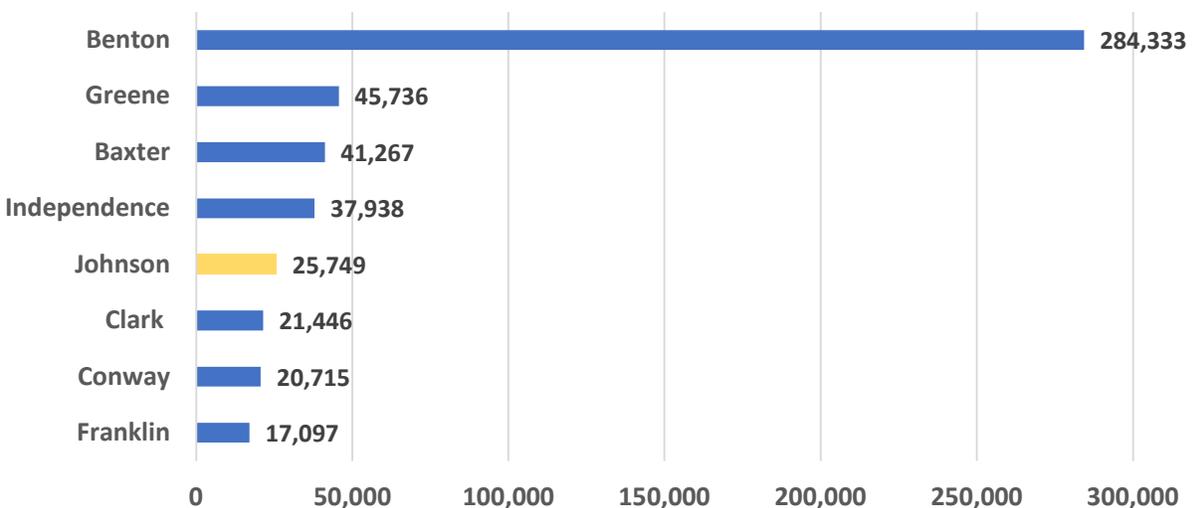
Source: 2020 Population Census



Johnson County had 25,749 residents in 2020, putting it near the middle compared to the other counties in this analysis. All counties used for comparison are within 20,000 of the population of Johnson County except for Benton County. Benton County has a considerably larger population than the rest of the counties used for this analysis, with 284,333 residents in 2020 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Population by County 2020

Source: 2020 Population Census

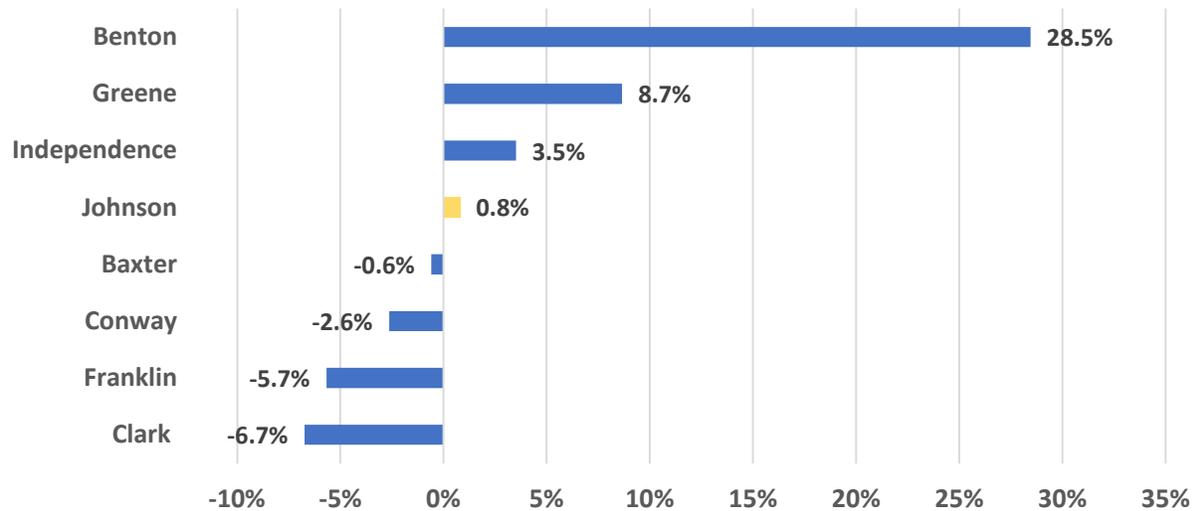


Population Change 2010 to 2020

Benton County had the largest population growth from 2010 to 2020 by more than threefold. Johnson County had the fourth largest growth, increasing less than 1% or approximately 200 people during the decade (Figure 4). Four counties (Clark, Franklin, Conway and Baxter) experienced population decline during this ten-year period.

Figure 4. Population Change by County 2010 to 2020

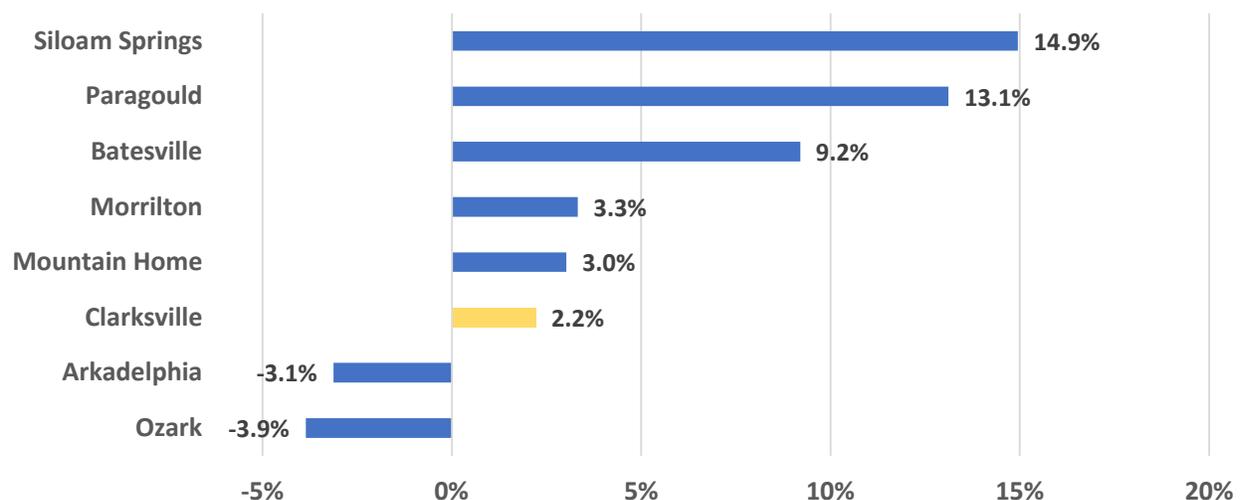
Source: 2020 Population Census



All but two of the cities in this analysis (Ozark and Arkadelphia) experienced population growth from 2010 to 2020 (Figure 5). The City of Clarksville grew a little more than 2% or by approximately 200 people during the decade.

Figure 5. Population Change by City 2010 to 2020

Source: Census Population Estimates

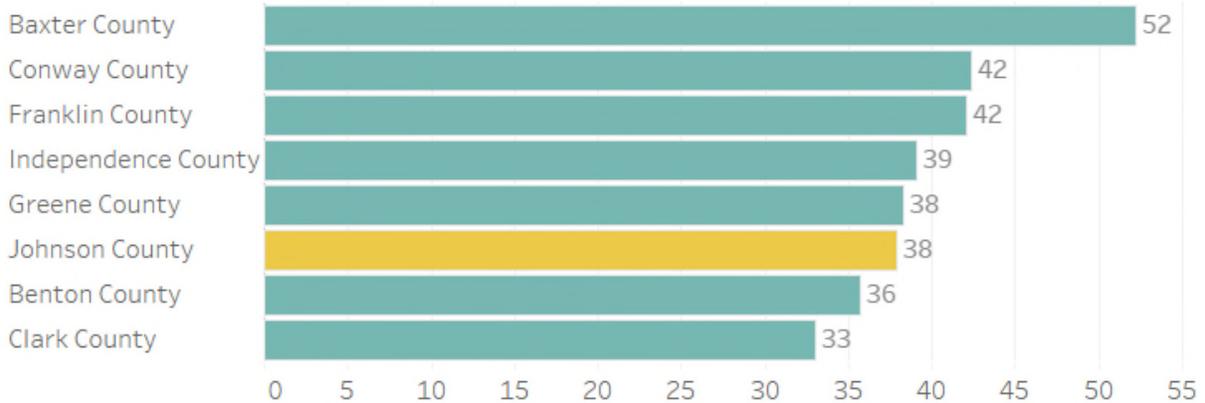


Population by Age

The median age in Johnson County is 38, giving the county the third lowest median age among the counties studied (Figure 6). Baxter county stands out with a median age of 52, which is considerably higher than the other comparison counties.

Figure 6. Median Age by County 2019

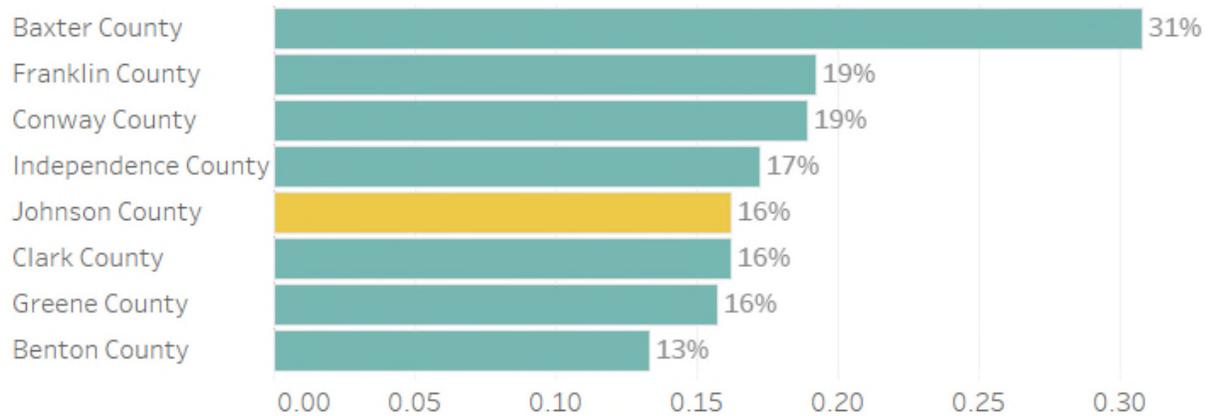
Source: American Community Survey



Seniors make up 16% of the population of Johnson County, which is like most of the other counties studied. Baxter County stands out with a considerably higher share of the population that is 65 or older, 31% (Figure 7). The county with the smallest share of seniors is Benton County, with 13%.

Figure 7. Percent of Population 65 and Older by County 2019

Source: American Community Survey and Census Population Estimates

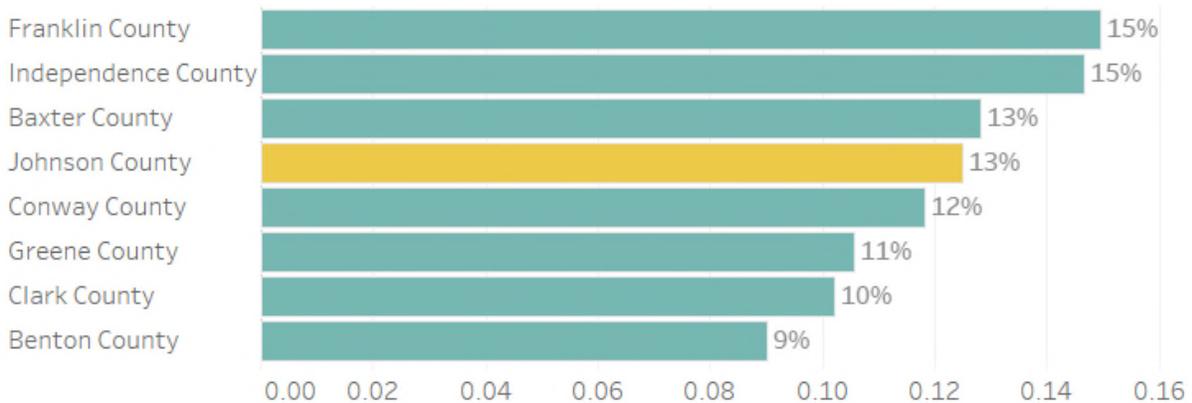


Change in Population by Age

All counties in the study saw growth in the population of seniors in their communities from 2010 to 2019. The population of seniors grew slowest in Benton County (9%) and fastest in Franklin and Independence Counties (15% each) (Figure 8). Johnson County experienced relatively moderate growth in its population of seniors (13%).

Figure 8. Percent Change in Population 65 and Older by County 2010 to 2019

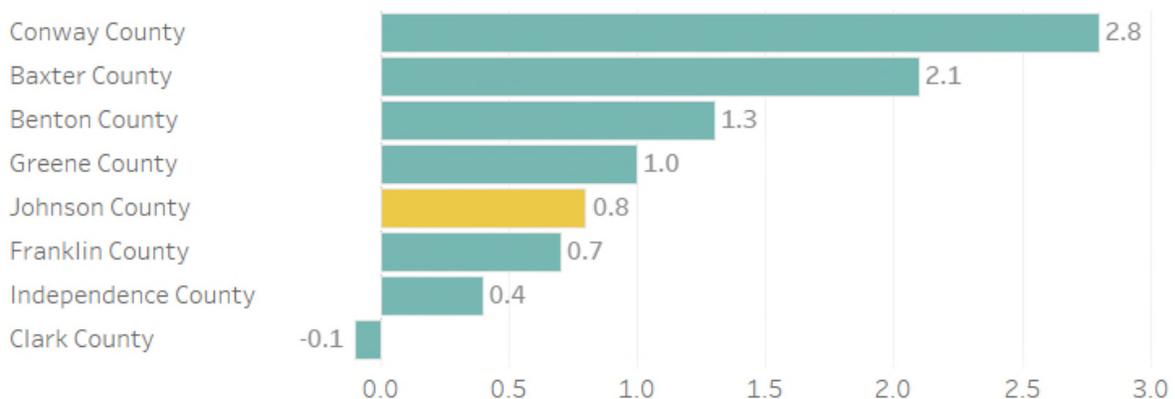
Source: American Community Survey and Census Population Estimates



Only one county (Clark) saw its median age decrease from 2010 to 2019. All other counties experienced an increase in median age of at least 0.4 years during that time, with Conway County increasing the most (2.8 years). The median age in Johnson County increased by 0.8 years from 37.1 to 37.9 years (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Change in Median Age by County 2010 to 2019

Source: American Community Survey and Census Population Estimates

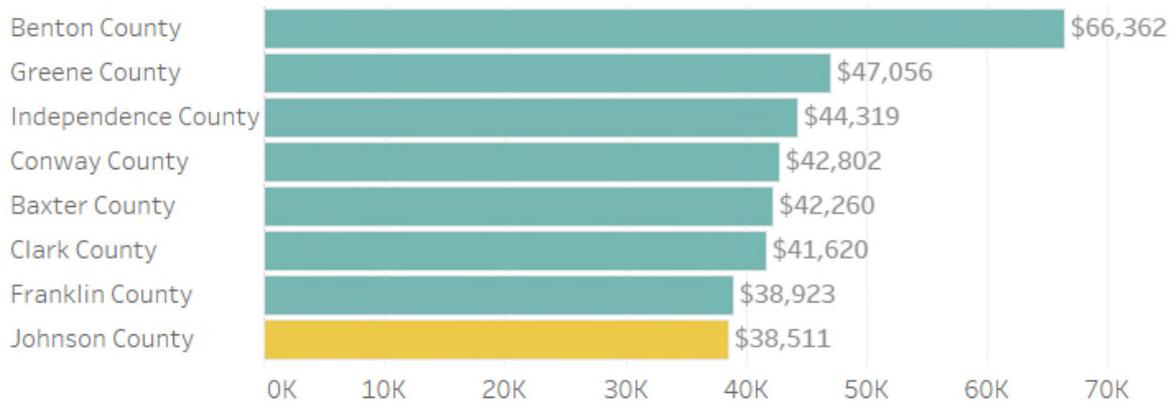


Median Household Income

Johnson County has the lowest median household income of the counties studied (\$38,511). However, four of the counties have median household incomes that are within \$5,000 of Johnson County's (Figure 10). Benton County stands out with a median household income considerably higher than the remaining comparison counties (\$66,362).

Figure 10. Median Household Income by County 2019

Source: American Community Survey



V. Infrastructure

Education

Educational Attainment

Johnson County lags all other benchmark cities in several categories of educational attainment, including being highest with percentage of population without a high school diploma and lowest with percentages having an associate degree, some college but no degree, and a bachelor's degree. The county ranks in the middle of the pack with respect to percentage of population with a graduate or professional degree.

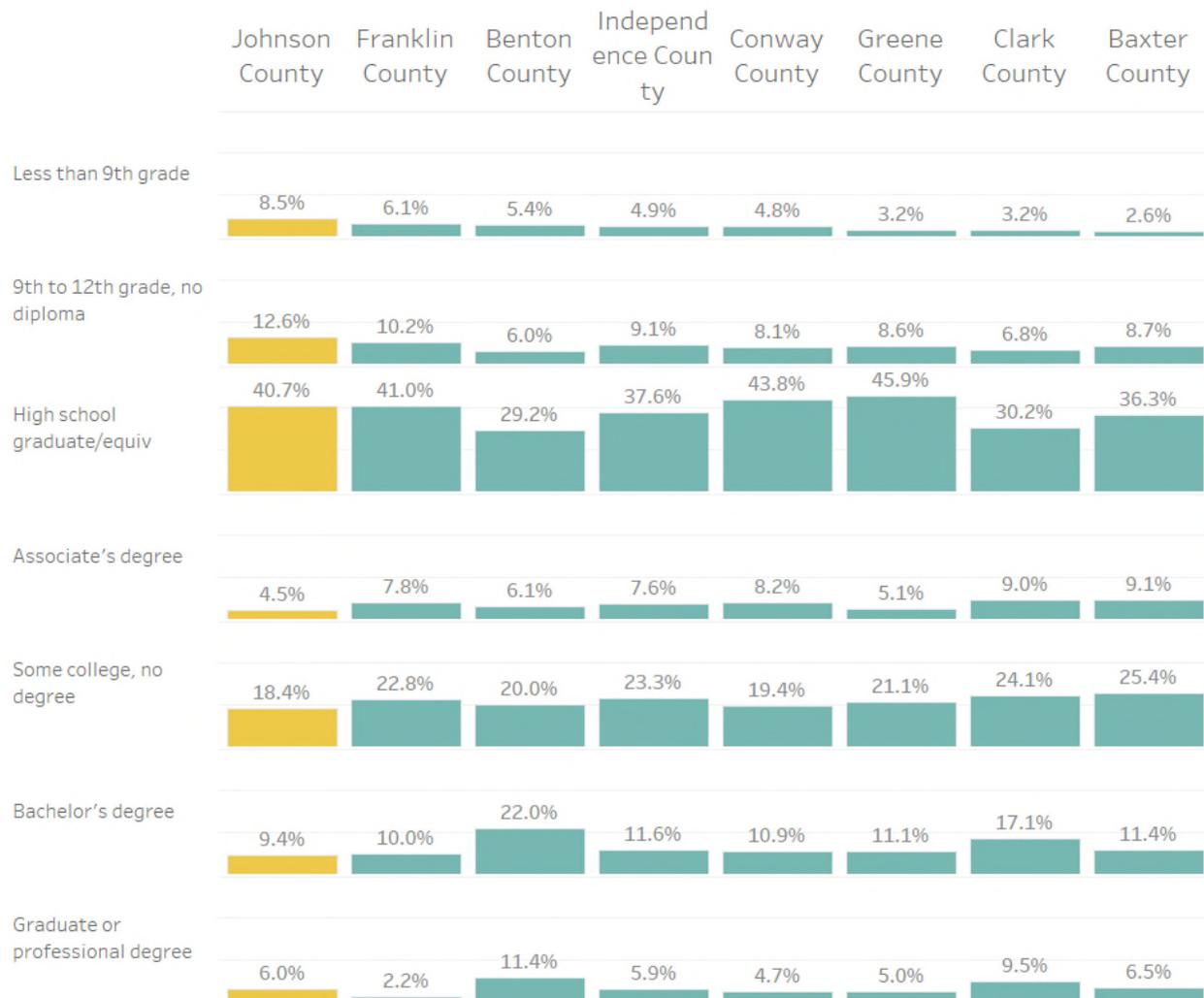
Among the benchmark counties in the study, Johnson County had the highest share of people 25 years of age and older with no high school diploma (21%) compared to the median of benchmark counties (12%). Johnson County also had a smaller share of its population 25 years of age and older with a bachelor's degree or higher (15%) compared to all benchmark counties, except Franklin County (12%).

The largest share of the population 25 years of age and older in all benchmark counties are those with a High School diploma as their highest level of educational attainment. The share of the population in this category ranges from 29% in Benton County to 46% in Greene County (Figure 11). The share of the population in this category in Johnson County (41%) is somewhat higher than the median of benchmark counties, which is 38%.

Given the type of manufacturing in Johnson County, it is somewhat surprising that less than 5% of the population 25 years of age and above in the County had an associate degree, which was lower than all seven benchmark cities. The share of this population with associate degrees in the benchmark counties ranged from a low of 5% in Greene County to 9% in Baxter County.

Figure 11. Percent of Highest Educational Attainment by County 2019

Source: American Community Survey



Childcare

Many of the benchmark cities offer childcare opportunities at locations designed to improve convenience for parents by placing centers on public school campuses or local college campuses. Public school districts in Batesville have incorporated childcare into their campus, with before and after school care, and a pre-school on site. Similarly, Paragould public school districts offer pre-k education programs and Mountain Home recently began an on-site pre-k program on their kindergarten campus. Mountain Home's program is offered at a discounted rate in conjunction with afterschool care. The City of Morrilton also has a day care option through the local college in addition to several private childcare facilities.

Affordability of childcare can be a challenge, and several benchmark cities have adopted programs to address this issue. Paragould and Arkadelphia reported financial assistance programs within the area for child-care. Mountain Home stands out in offering a completely free all-day summer camp for the entire month of June.

Arkadelphia also prioritizes childcare opportunities for children with special needs. Through a partnership with Washington Baptist University, Pediatrics Plus is now offering childcare services for children with special needs in Arkadelphia.

Career Pipeline

Benchmark cities emphasized the importance of constant communication and cooperation among local businesses, city leadership, public schools and any institutions of higher education. The communication between these entities was reported as critical for meeting current and future workforce needs.

In Batesville, all public schools have instructional programs that teach workforce basics. They also collaborate with the community college and Lyon College to tailor programs for specific employment needs.

Paragould's Black River Technical College (BRTC) is targeting programs to specific local workforce needs through its Career and Technical Center curriculum for high school students. Students from participating high schools can graduate with their high school diploma and a BRTC certificate in allied health, welding, industrial electricity/electronics, machine tool technology or auto collision repair. The technical college plays an important role in keeping the lines of communication open between educational institutions, businesses, and leadership because it hosts the Greene County Industrial Training Center. This training center acts as a convener of local businesses, industries and educational providers that is focused on improving the workforce and opportunities for the entire county. Paragould also reports higher than average 3rd grade reading and 5th grade math assessments for their public schools. Raising these scores has been a focus for several years and is part of a strategy to improve the local workforce readiness.

Arkadelphia's public schools are home to award winning extracurricular programs in band, football and quiz bowl, giving their public education system a well-rounded image. The local higher education institutions in Arkadelphia have also seen growth in student population in the past few years.

Mountain Home's high school is a career academy model school where all students are placed in one of three academies. Each academy links to a career path at Arkansas State University Mountain Home (ASUMH) designed to meet the needs of local businesses. High school students in the area can also begin taking up to 4 classes a year for free at ASUMH beginning in their junior year. Additionally, a privately funded Promise Scholarship funds the first two years of college for high school graduates in Mountain Home. The high school has partnership with the regional hospital for a "White Coat" medical program where students can become a Certified Nursing Assistant before they graduate. Students who complete the program are also eligible for a sign-on bonus with the hospital.

Siloam Springs fostered a partnership between the high school and businesses like Simmons Foods to offer the Career Academy of Siloam Springs (CASS) program. This program is designed to help high school graduates enter the workforce with skills to meet current needs of businesses in the community. The community is also considering opening vocational and technical classes to adults.

The University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton (UACCM) has a workforce development center that allows high school students to earn college credit and offers non-credit educational and training opportunities for local businesses wanting to improve the skills and efficiency of their employees. UACCM has programs that provide certificates of proficiency (4 months), technical certificates (9 months), and 2-year associate degrees in for people wanting to enhance their workforce skills. Green Bay Packaging, the largest employer in the area, also has its own workforce training center. Morrilton voters passed a school millage in 2015 that funded improvements for the South Conway County School District, including safe rooms for all campuses, a multi-purpose arena at the high school,

and other improvements. This type of visible public-school improvement is reported to have created momentum and a mindset shift in the community. With that momentum, the city was able to issue bonds to fund a new city hall and improvements for all parks and fire stations. The city was able to change facades downtown and pave roads, but the visibility of the investments also brought new ideas and buzz.

Transportation

Figure 12 provides an overview of transportation infrastructure for each benchmark city. Benchmark cities that do not have direct interstate access still report competing well due to alternate transportation options and large trade areas. Paragould, for instance, has a city owned airport and relies on its rail line. Rail is a long-time driving force in the Paragould economy, not only for transportation of goods into and out of the city, but also because rail cars and parts are manufactured in the area. Mountain Home reports a large trade area despite its small population size and lack of interstate access.

Figure 12. Transportation Infrastructure for Benchmark Cities

Source: Key informants and benchmark city, county, chamber of commerce, and economic development websites.

Benchmark City	Closest Waterways	Rail	Closest Airport	Interstates
Ozark	Fort Smith Port Authority, Five Rivers Distribution, and CGB Enterprises, Inc. (approximately 41 miles)	Union Pacific Railroad	Fort Smith (FSM)	I40
Batesville	White River Regional Port Authority (approximately 29 miles)	Class III line leads to Union Pacific Railroad	Jonesboro (JBR), and Southside	NA
Paragould	Pemiscot Port on the Mississippi River (approximately 55 miles)	Union Pacific Railroad	Jonesboro (JBR), and municipal airport	NA
Arkadelphia	Port of Camden, AR (approximately 49 miles)	Union Pacific Railroad	Hot Springs (HOT)	I30
Mountain Home	White River Regional Port Authority (approximately 62 miles)	Class III line leads to Union Pacific Railroad	Harrison (HRO)	NA
Siloam Springs	NA	Kansas City Southern Railway	Bentonville (XNA)	NA
Morrilton	Port of Dardanelle (approximately 26 miles)	Union Pacific Railroad	Little Rock (LIT)	I40
Clarksville	Port of Dardanelle (approximately 31 miles)	Union Pacific Railroad	Clarksville Municipal Airport	I40

Some benchmark cities are also looking ahead to potential future road and highway expansion, such as the extension of the highway 412 corridor across the northern part of Arkansas. Benchmark cities also reported anticipating transportation challenges when new companies come in. Cities were concerned about supporting increases to traffic or vehicles like log trucks.

Housing

Nearly all benchmark cities reported issues with housing availability. Some concerns were primarily acute and related to the recent swing in the housing market that is restricting residential inventories and driving up construction costs. However, some housing concerns reflect more longstanding issues.

Batesville is seeking to expand its local residential housing inventory by looking into changes to zoning designations for commercial areas. Changing some commercial structures to an R2 zoning designation would allow for a shop on a ground floor to also have a residential apartment upstairs. This strategy may also help improve the cost-effectiveness of refurbishing downtown historic structures.

Mountain Home passed a resolution to address its housing inventory shortage. This resolution offers a 2% cash back rebate for new residential construction in current R1 subdivisions. The city council has dedicated \$100,000 to this initiative (individual rebates are capped at \$7,000). The city hopes that this incentive will promote new construction, help offset the rising costs associated with home building, and build the sales and property tax base in the area.

Siloam Springs recently experienced a substantial increase in subdivision development and is observing higher rates of mid-priced homes and duplexes. Morrilton is focusing on encouraging infill of older subdivisions as a cost-effective measure. This strategy reduces the costs associated with developing new subdivisions like extending water and sewer and building new sidewalks.

Utilities (Water, Electric, Broadband, etc.)

An analysis of the benchmark city water rates showed a range of commercial water costs. Assuming a commercial water user has the smallest available meter, a 100,000-gallon monthly water bill ranges from a cost of \$165 to \$462 (Figure 13). The average bill of this type would be \$289 a month for the benchmark cities. For 100,000 gallons of commercial wastewater, the charges ranged from \$182 to \$446, with an average of \$367 per month.

Sanitation rates for commercial operations in the benchmark cities range from \$19.95 to \$39 per month for the smallest available option. The average monthly commercial sanitation rate is \$26.60 for the benchmark cities. Only two cities (Paragould and Siloam Springs) provide locally owned electric services. The most common electric provider is Entergy. Various alternative electric providers are available in Ozark, Arkadelphia and Mountain Home.

Most benchmark cities have at least two providers that offer commercial internet rates at 100 MBPS speed. Monthly charges for that level of service range from \$50 to \$99.95. Some service providers report non-standard rates that vary within zip codes and could not provide average service charges.

Clarksville utility rates, while not the lowest, are comparable to the seven benchmark cities. Rates can only be compared in the context of the quality of service. High quality utility services are required if communities want to grow and maintain a high quality of life for residents.

Figure 13. Benchmark City Utility Comparison

Sources: Utility Operators and City Representatives

	Clarksville	Ozark	Batesville	Paragould
Monthly Commercial Water Charges (for 100,000 gallons at lowest meter size)	\$ 330.41	\$ 202.09	\$ 408.43	\$ 251.41
Monthly Commercial Wastewater Charges (for 100,000 gallons at lowest meter size)	\$ 489.00	\$ 182.56	\$ 419.58	\$ 441.25
Monthly Commercial Sanitation Charges (minimum)	\$ 10.00	\$ 19.95	\$ 15.44	\$ 39.00
Commercial Electric- Locally Owned	Yes Base Charge-\$250 Plus \$4.00/KW Plus \$0.0415/KWH Plus Fuel Adjustment Cost of power & losses above \$0.055/KWH is added to each bill	No	No	Yes Paragould Light Water & Cable Facility Charge=\$34.00 First 750 \$0.10528/kWh Next 9,250 \$0.07639/kWh 10,000+ \$0.04889/kWh Demand Charge: First 25 kW =No Charge Next 475 \$5.81/kW 500kW+ \$5.20/kW
Commercial Electricity - Entergy Small General Service: Service Charge \$24.25 kw over 6 kw = \$4.43 Per kWh 1st 900 plus 150 kWh over 6kW \$0.05637 All additional \$0.03972/kWh	No	No	Yes	Yes
Commercial Electric- Other	No	Yes Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative Small Commercial: Service Charge \$21 First 600 kWh \$.09887/kWh Excess kWh \$.08002/kWh	No	No
Commercial Internet Rates	Clarksville has five Internet providers with varying rates and services up to 1000 Mbps in addition to Clarksville Connected Utilities which is installing a fiber network in the city.	Dobson: \$90.00/mo	Suddenlink: \$90/mo 100mbps AT&T: \$50/mo 100mbps Additional service with variable rates from: Ritter and Yelcot	Locally Owned: \$57.95/mo 100mbps AT&T: \$50/mo 100mbps
City Free WiFi	Yes - Downtown & Public School Campus	No	Yes- Downtown	Yes- Some hotspots

	Arkadelphia	Mountain Home (Baxter)	Siloam Springs	Morrilton
Monthly Commercial Water Charges (for 100,000 gallons at lowest meter size)	\$ 165.08	\$ 288.15	\$ 462.84	\$ 245.00
Monthly Commercial Wastewater Charges (for 100,000 gallons at lowest meter size)	\$ 194.67	\$ 353.16	\$ 446.49	\$ 320.80
Monthly Commercial Sanitation Charges (minimum)	\$ 22.00	\$ 32.39	\$ 22.48	\$ 35.00
Commercial Electric- Locally Owned	No	No	Yes City of Siloam Springs Electric Department Monthly fee: \$15 Per kWh: \$0.10525 Plus: Fuel adjustment (power cost adjustment).	No
Commercial Electricity - Entergy Small General Service: Service Charge \$24.25 kw over 6 kw = \$4.43 Per kWh 1st 900 plus 150 kWh over 6kW \$0.05637 All additional \$0.03972/kWh	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Commercial Electric- Other	Yes South Central Electric Cooperative Small General Service: Service Charge - \$20.00 All kWh \$0.08578/kWh	Yes North Arkansas Electric Cooperative Small Commercial: Service Charge \$0.66 (10) or \$1.21 (30) Summer \$0.10466/kWh 0-500 Winter kWh \$0.10466/kWh Excess kWh (winter) \$0.08394/kWh	No	No
Commercial Internet Rates	AT&T: \$50/mo 100mbps	Suddenlink: \$90/mo 100mbps North Arkansas Electric Cooperative: \$79.95/mo 100mbps South Central Connect: \$99.95/mo 100mbps Additional service with variable rates from: Ritter, Yelcot, and Windstream.	Cox: \$124/mo 100mbps	Suddenlink: \$90/mo 100mbps AT&T: \$50/mo 100mbps
City Free WiFi	No	No	No	No

Industrial Sites & Buildings

All benchmark cities have industrial sites and buildings available for existing business wanting to expand or new businesses wanting to locate in their community.

- Batesville and Independence County officials reported four industrial sites and two buildings in the County, and all have utilities. Acreage ranges from 10 to 60 acres and building size ranges from approximately 12,000 to 104,000 square feet.
- Paragould officials reported that they have the 78.77-acre South Industrial Site, which is shovel ready with all utilities connected to the property.
- Arkadelphia has 5 industrial sites or buildings and one technology park with 42 acres. Square footage ranges from 55,000 to 345,000.
- Mountain Home has four industrial sites ranging from about 16 acres to 100 acres.
- Siloam Springs has 5 industrial sites or buildings, including one building with over 240,000 square feet, and industrial sites with acreage ranging from about 20 acres to 200 acres.
- Morrilton has 9 industrial sites or buildings, with acreage ranging from 1.8 acres to 40 acres and square footage ranging from 2,680 square feet to over 31,000 square feet.

VI. Economy

Business Climate

Nearly all benchmark cities mentioned increases in unemployment and significant business barriers due to COVID-19. However, most benchmark cities also anticipate growth over the next year in retail and restaurant activity as well as expansion of existing industries. Many of the cities described being poised to take advantage of the “post-COVID” rebound in their communities. For instance, Mountain Home reports an anticipated increase in tourism through vacation rental companies like Airbnb as well as resorts and restaurants.

Several communities mentioned seeking to tap into the increase in remote work opportunities across the nation. For example, Paragould is seeking to position itself to welcome workers in the “gig economy” through low utility rates and good schools. Paragould reports an influx of remote workers and anticipates this trend to continue. For other cities, like Siloam Springs, remaining flexible and avoiding a set economic package is a key strategy for recruiting new business.

The existing economic base and other local factors influence the business climate of benchmark cities. For example, Morrilton benefits from having several of its largest employers headquartered in the area, which helps to insulate them from potential relocation losses. Benchmark cities with local institutions of higher education described those entities as solid employers. And, although Arkadelphia’s top five industries are manufacturing, education, retail, healthcare, and food service, they cite the area’s natural surroundings as impacting their economic development opportunities. Because the city is in a heavily wooded area, they are positioned to attract related industries, such as a paper company.

Recent Developments

Many benchmark cities described a slow, but not disastrous economy during COVID-19. When taking an overall view of the last 3 years, many cities described modest to significant growth. For example, Batesville has seen expansions in its banking sector as well as considerable investments in the city's quality of life from a sales tax increase. The Batesville sales tax funded a community center with amenities (aquatics, 3 gym floors, 10-lane pool, splash pad etc.), which has over 8,000 members.

This year Paragould saw an expansion from Anchor Packaging that created 45 new jobs as well as new plans for restaurants in the area. Paragould attributes this growth to a strong workforce and supportive business community.

Arkadelphia described a growing economy with new credit unions, a new hotel, restaurants, more retail and a much-improved downtown. Although they saw some closings during the pandemic, Arkadelphia also has had several recent business expansions. The city attributes this resilience to an emphasis on infrastructure. They describe their airport and hangar as a major asset and collaborate with Henderson State University, which has an aviation major. Arkadelphia has also worked with the Arkansas Department of Transportation to widen streets to improve infrastructure for shipping.

Furthermore, Arkadelphia attributes the success of downtown to how well the businesses work together and promote each other. The city has a monthly "shop late" event to generate traffic and advertising downtown. For these events, businesses work together to make the experience fresh and interesting. For example, the bakery will sell goods out of the boutique during "Shop Late". Additionally, a local internet provider, Ritter communications, provided matching grants for the downtown area to help fund improvements to façades.

Mountain Home was the first city in Arkansas to create an entertainment district in 2019, taking advantage of a new state law. Many new businesses have opened downtown since this change, including a new brewery in a historic building and a new restaurant. Two upcoming openings are scheduled and multiple real estate transactions for downtown buildings are in progress.

Siloam Springs has taken advantage of the local arts economy with four public art projects and a recent increase in downtown occupancy rates.

Morrilton describes an influx of private investments following visible investments by the city in the downtown area. For instance, a private investor recently purchased downtown buildings and turned them into offices, a brewery, a hotel and other businesses. This further contributed to momentum and positivity in the economy. Morrilton also attributes much of their recent success to the relatively low costs of land and real estate, and they have not had to use business incentives. Other contributors to success are the local volunteer fire department and a high safety ranking.

Influence of Nearby Cities

Surrounding cities influence many of the benchmark cities by being in their trade area. Benchmark cities commonly reported a symbiotic relationship with nearby cities, in that when one does well, they all do well.

Because many residents live in one city and work in another, there are mutual and reciprocal benefits to regional economic improvements. Some respondents placed special importance on coordinating economic development efforts. Several benchmark cities also reported that they benefited from the

relatively faster increase in real estate prices in nearby cities, making homes and retail space more desirable by comparison.

Several benchmark cities also reported that their cities benefit from surrounding municipalities in terms of what they can include in marketing and branding materials. Many cities “claim” assets that are not technically within the city limits, especially if it is within a close drive. These assets include colleges, retail shopping, hospitals and other amenities.

Incentives

None of the benchmark cities reported successfully using opportunity zones in their economic development efforts, although some have access to them. Batesville reported that one opportunity zone could not be used because of its location in relation to a highway.

Several benchmark cities have dedicated funding for business incentives. For instance, Paragould has a permanent quarter-cent sales tax which can be used toward incentives, including infrastructure assistance, training assistance or land purchase. The specifics of the incentives are negotiated with companies on a case-by-case basis.

Arkadelphia uses funds from a county sales tax for incentives to draw in new companies. The amount of the incentive depends on the number of jobs and the pay scale, with a total annual budget of about \$800,000. Arkadelphia also supports economic development through a recently passed ½ cent economic development sales tax.

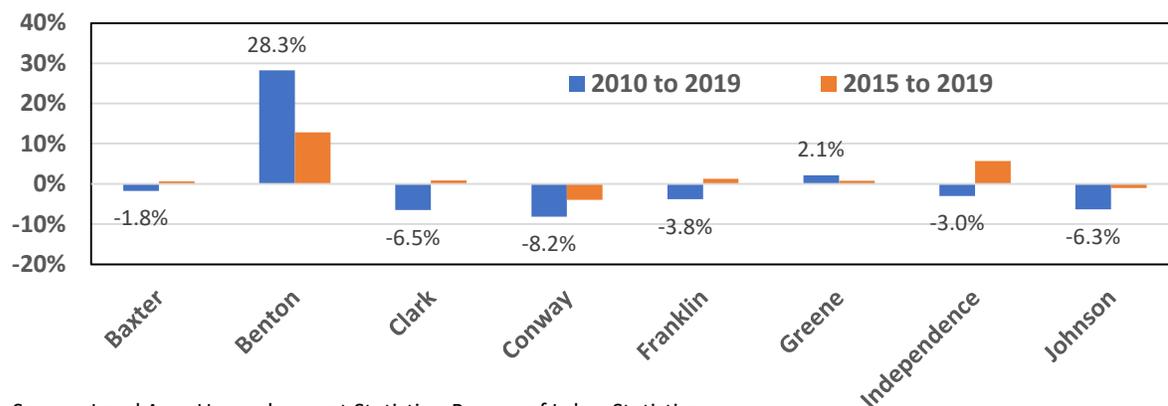
Morrilton relies on its affordable land, real estate and utilities to draw new business and does not use or “need” business incentives. Mountain Home also does not use incentives to attract new business but does have a 2% cash back rebate (up to \$7,000) for new residential homes.

Workforce

Like most of the benchmark counties, the Johnson County labor force declined from 2010 to 2019. The major exception is Benton County whose labor force increased 28% during this period (Figure 14). Johnson County’s labor force declined 6.3% during this nine-year period, which was the second largest decline among benchmark counties. Only Conway County had a larger decline in their labor force of 8.2%. More recently, from 2015 to 2019 most benchmark counties experienced a small increase in their labor force. The two exceptions were Conway and Johnson counties.

Figure 14 Change in County Labor Force

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

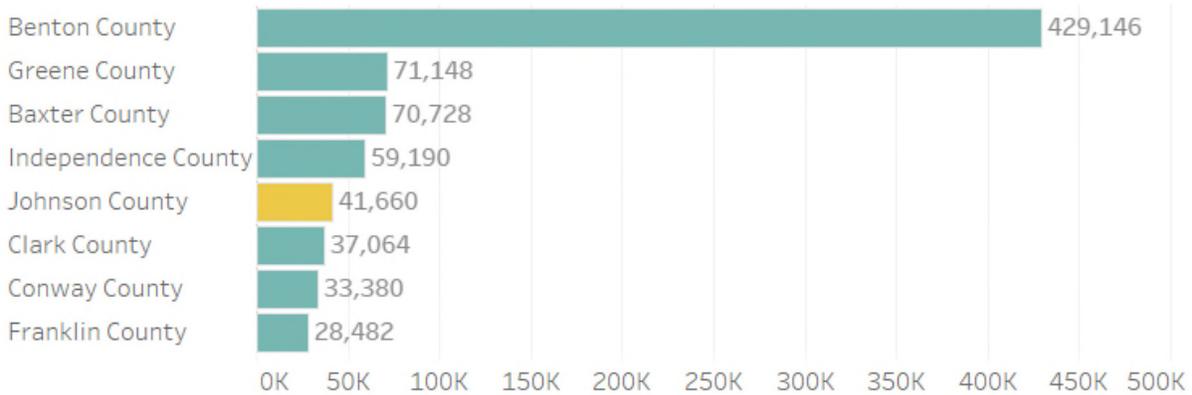


Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The population 16 years and older in a county is considered a proxy for the potential workforce. Johnson County had 41,660 residents 16 years and older in 2019 according to Census Population Estimates (Figure 15). This number puts Johnson County roughly in the middle of the benchmark counties. Benton County stands out as an outlier with a considerably higher number of residents 16 and older (429,146).

Figure 15. Population 16 and Older by County 2019

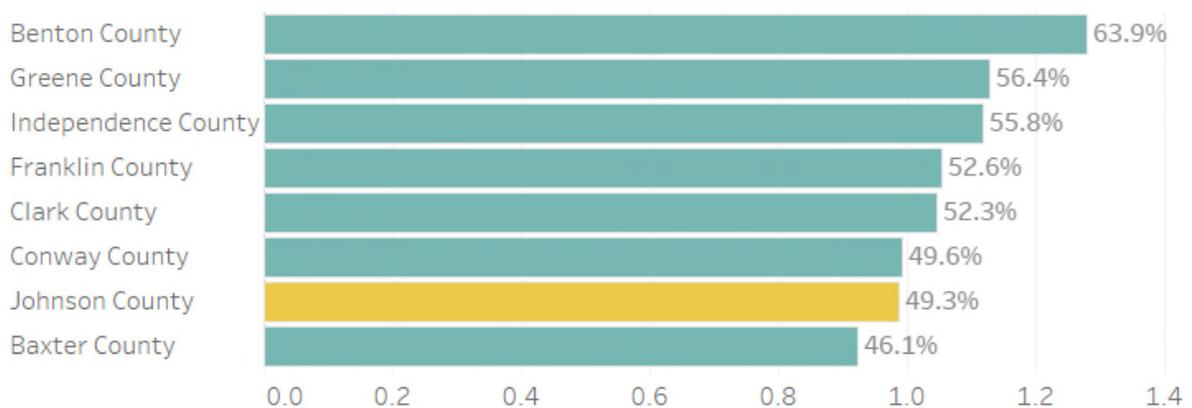
Source: Census Population Estimates



The labor force participation rate is calculated by dividing the current labor force by the population 16 years and older. The ratio represents an estimate of the share of the eligible population that is participating in the labor force. Johnson County had a labor force participation rate of 49.3% in 2019, which was near the bottom of the comparison counties (Figure 16). Baxter County had a lower labor force participation rate (46.1%). However, Baxter County has a large retiree population, which greatly reduces the labor force participation rate. Johnson County is very similar to Conway County in that their labor force participation rates are below 50%.

Figure 16. Labor Force Participation Rate by County 2019

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census Population Estimates

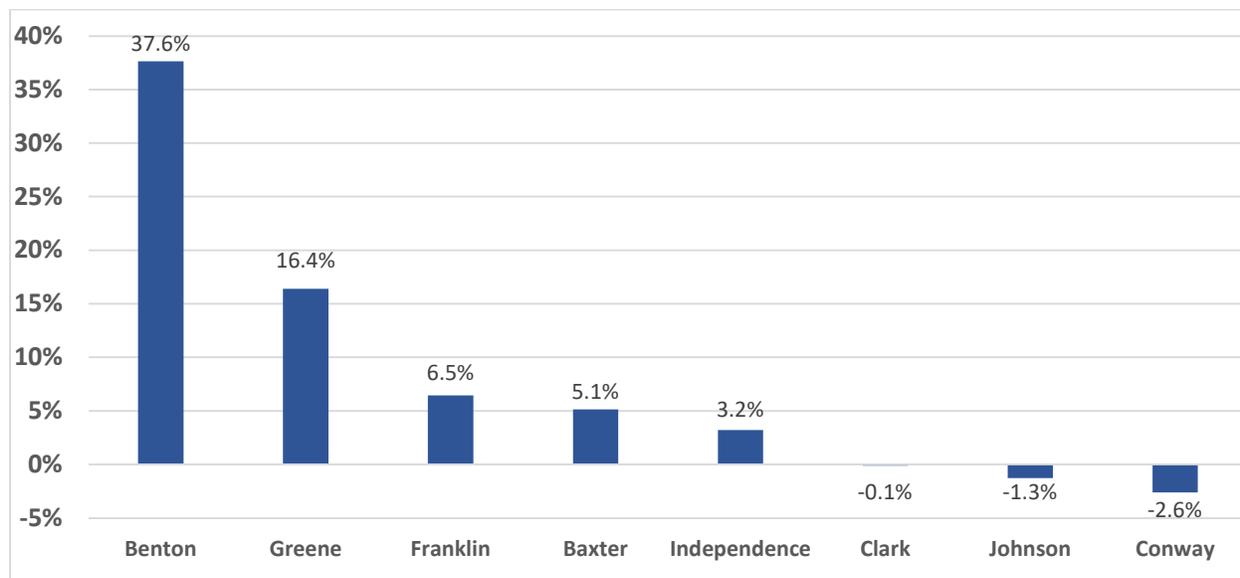


Employment Change 2010 – 2019

While five of the seven benchmark counties experienced employment growth, total employment in Johnson County declined slightly (-1.3%) from 2010 to 2019 (Figure 17). During this time, Clark and Conway counties also experienced slight declines in employment (-0.1% and -2.6% respectively). Benton County, the only metropolitan county included in the benchmark group, had the largest percent growth in employment during this period, growing nearly 38%. However, four rural counties, Independence, Baxter, Franklin and Greene, also saw employment growth during this time, from 3% to 16% during this nine-year period. Franklin County was an exception to the observation that larger counties experienced larger percentage growth in employment. Franklin County has a smaller population and workforce than Johnson County, but experienced a 6.5% increase in employment from 2010 to 2019.

Figure 17. Employment Change by County 2010 and 2019

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



Employment by Sector

Employment Share by Sector

Manufacturing, health care and social assistance, state and local government, and retail were the top four sectors in terms of employment for Johnson County in 2019 (Figure 18). These four sectors accounted for over one-half (55%) of total employment in 2019. Manufacturing provided the largest share of jobs in Johnson County (22.5%), which was larger than all other benchmark counties, except Greene County with nearly one-fourth (24.4%) of total employment in manufacturing (Figure 19).

Even though manufacturing employment declined in Johnson County during this nine-year period, it still accounts for the largest share of jobs in the county and provides a larger share of jobs compared to most benchmark counties. Manufacturing provides from approximately 8% of jobs in Benton County compared to 22.5% in Johnson County and a high of 24.4% in Greene County. The median share of manufacturing employment in the seven benchmark counties is only 11.6%, suggesting that Johnson County is considerably more dependent on manufacturing than other benchmark counties, except Greene.

Whereas Johnson County is more dependent on manufacturing jobs, it is close to the median in the share of government jobs and has a smaller share of jobs in the retail sector than all benchmark counties, except Benton County.

Employment Change by Sector

Three of the four largest sectors in Johnson County experienced declining employment from 2010 to 2019 (Figure 20). Only the health care and social assistance sector experienced growth in employment (18%) during this period. This was unlike the benchmark counties, which all experienced employment growth in at least two of the four largest sectors. Benton, Franklin and Greene counties experienced employment growth in all four of these sectors.

Manufacturing employment declined 14% in Johnson County, 29%, in Clark County and 8% in Independence County but increased from 6% to nearly 19% in the other five benchmark counties during this nine-year period. Employment in the health care and social assistance sector increased in all benchmark counties, except in Conway County during this nine-year period. The growth of this sector in Johnson County was near the median of the benchmark counties. Besides Johnson County, the only benchmark county experiencing a decline in employment in the retail trade sector was Conway County with a decline of 6%.

Figure 18. County Employment by Sector 2019

Source: Arkansas State Profile 2021, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

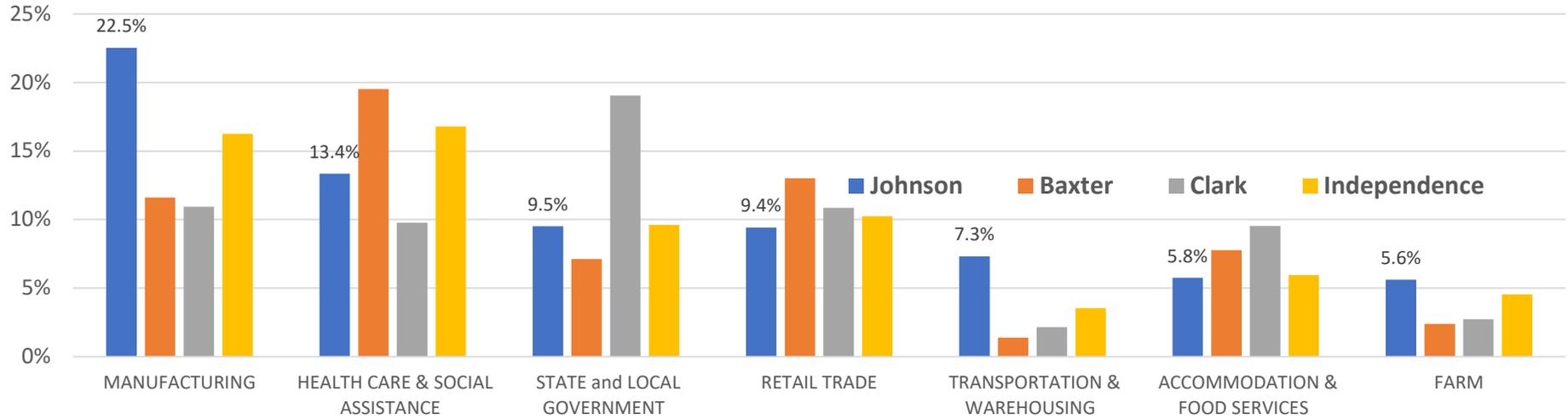


Figure 19. County Employment by Sector 2019

Source: Arkansas State Profile 2021, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

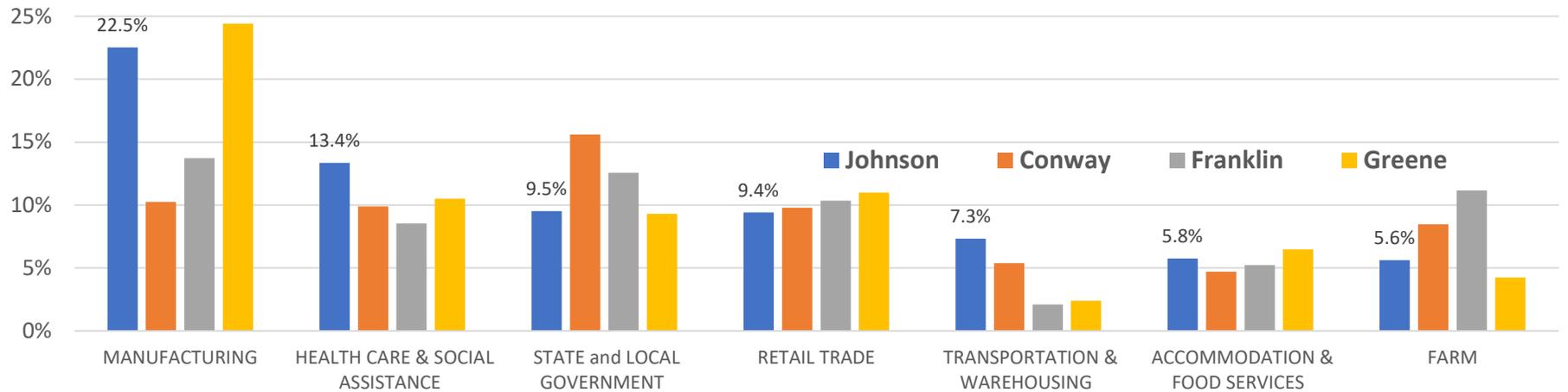
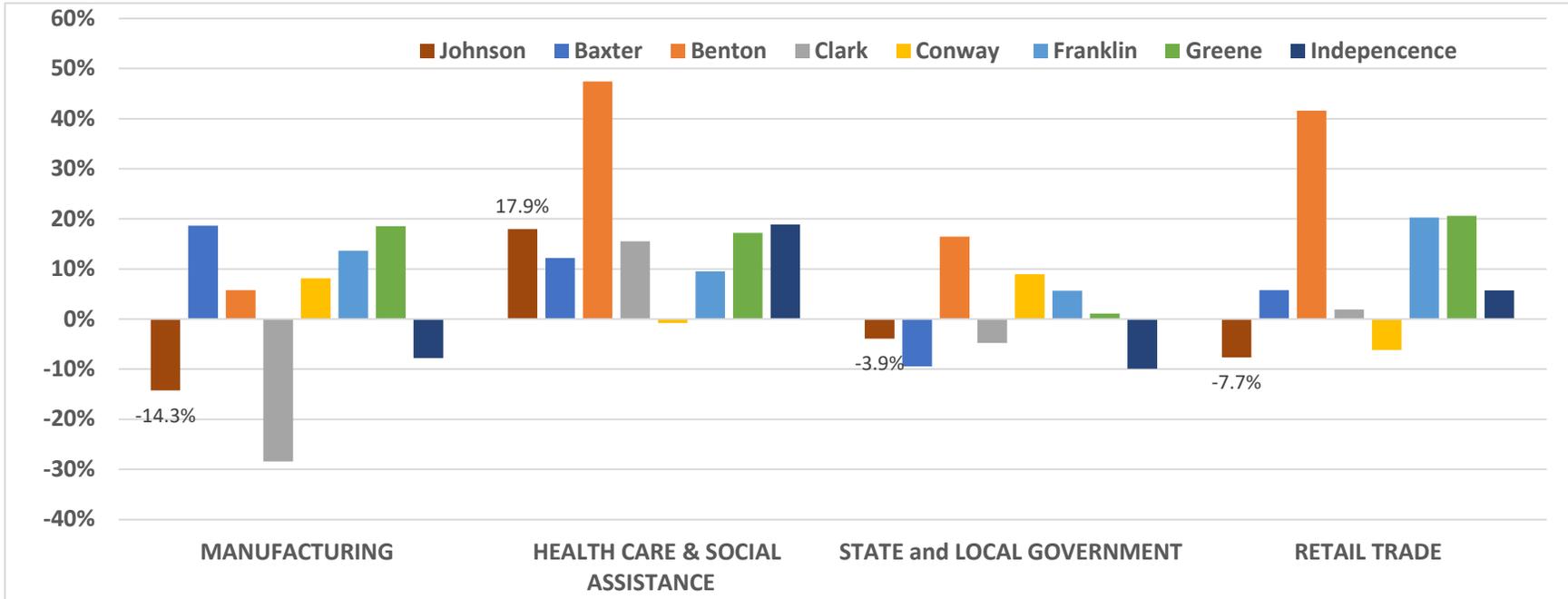


Figure 20. County Employment Change by Sector 2019

Source: Arkansas State Profile 2021, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

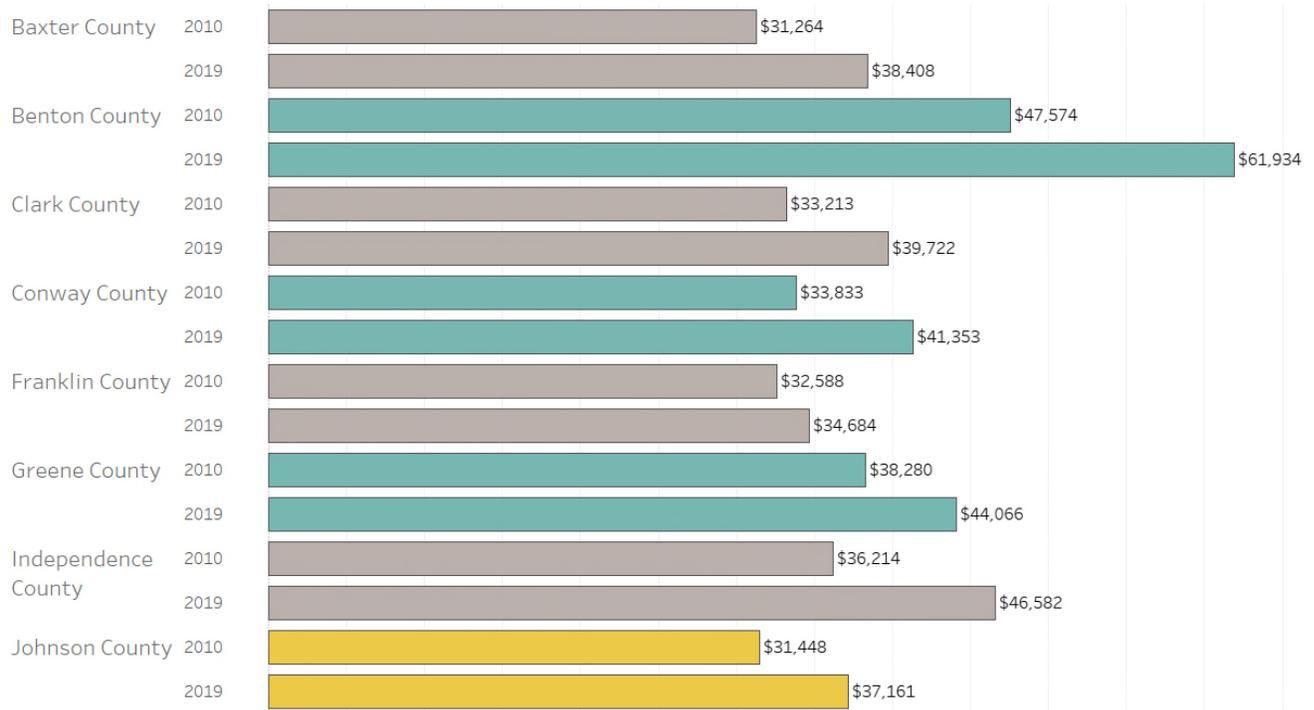


Average Earnings per Job

Johnson County’s average earnings per job increased 18%, from \$31,448 in 2010 to \$37,161 in 2019 (Figure 21). Average earnings per job in 2019 among comparison counties ranged from \$34,648 in Franklin County to \$61,934 in Benton County.

Figure 21. Average Earnings per Job by County 2010 and 2019

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



VII. Policies & Programs

City Codes & Ordinances

Only two of the benchmark cities indicated making changes in their city codes to address economic development or quality of life concerns. Arkadelphia made recent changes that simplify compliance with codes and ordinances. They also recently changed their sign ordinance to address most of the variances that have been requested over the last 5 years. Some of the most common signage variances requests involved sizing in relation to the façade of the building. This had the outcome of reducing red tape for business and making the signage policy easier to understand. Arkadelphia is also pursuing efforts to consolidate and simplify Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to eliminate redundancies and contradictions that deter investment.

Batesville implemented some ordinances to improve quality of life and walkability. These included ensuring that new subdivisions have sidewalks. Paragould emphasized the need for community input on any new ordinances or changes to existing ordinances.

Taxation

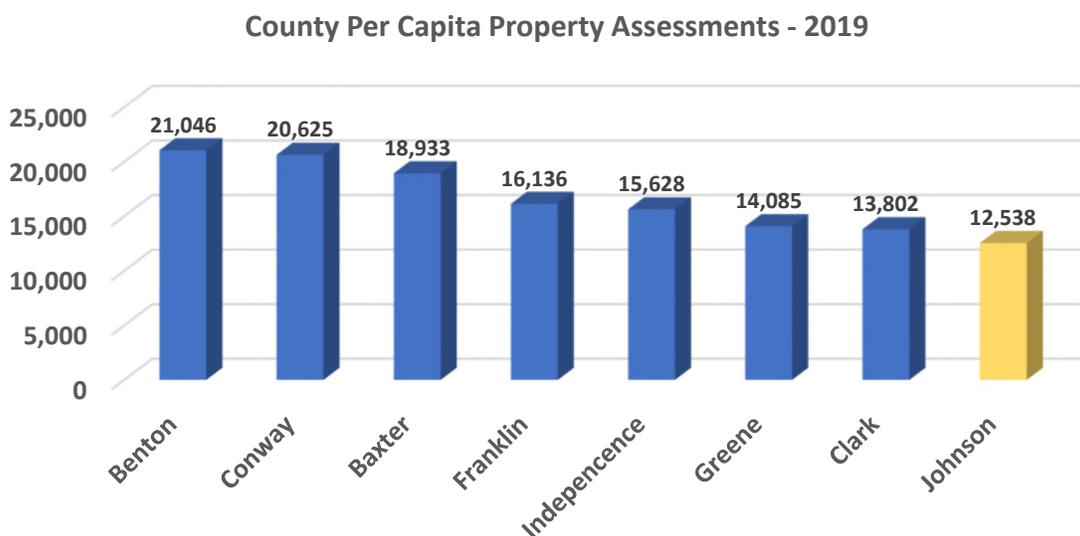
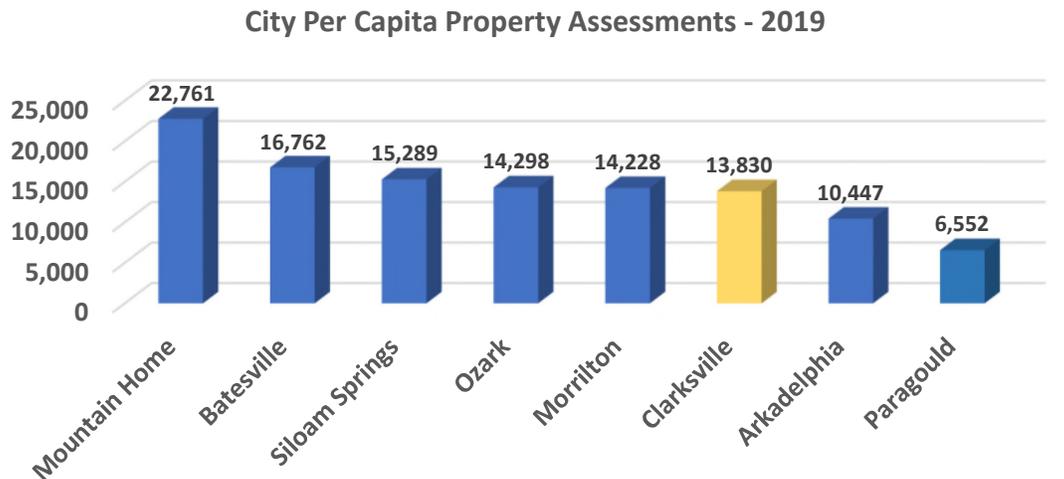
Property Assessments

The local tax base of Arkansas cities and counties consists primarily of the value of real and personal property as measured by property assessments and retail and service sector sales subject to a sales tax. Using the comparative measure of property assessments per capita, Clarksville was close to the median among benchmark cities and Johnson County ranked lower than all seven benchmark counties in 2019. Per capita property assessments among comparison cities ranged from \$6,552 in Paragould to \$22,761 in Mountain Home with Clarksville close to the median at \$13,830 in 2019.

Per capita property assessments among comparison counties range from a low of \$12,538 in Johnson County to \$21,046 in Benton County (Figure 22). Therefore, the capacity of Clarksville to generate revenue from the property tax is near the average compared to the comparison cities, whereas Johnson County has less capacity than the comparison counties.

Figure 22. City and County Per Capita Property Assessments 2019

Source: Calculated using Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department data and Census Population Estimates

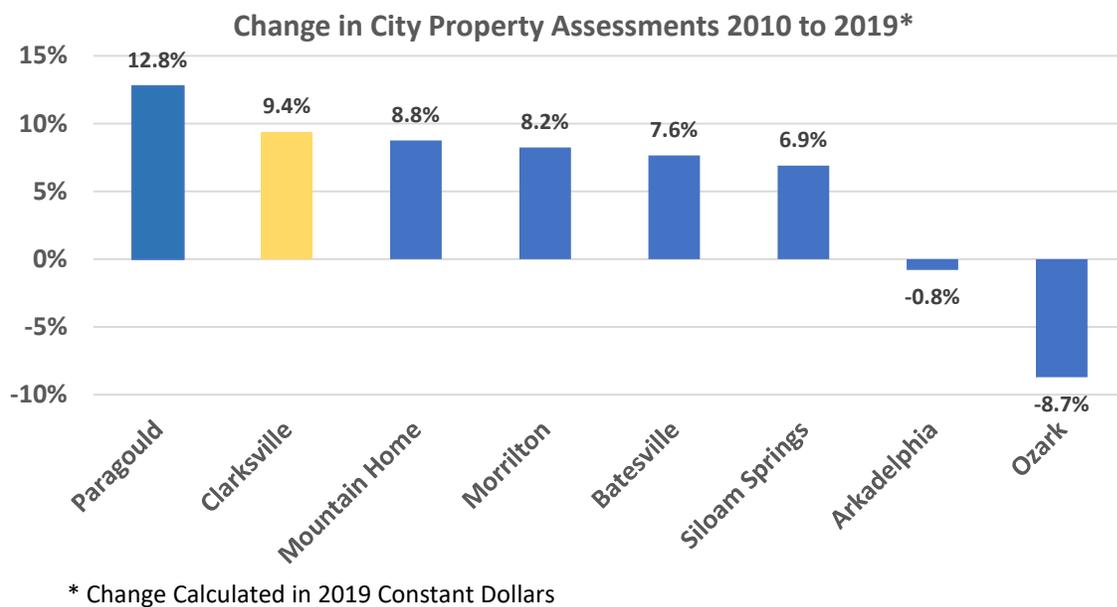
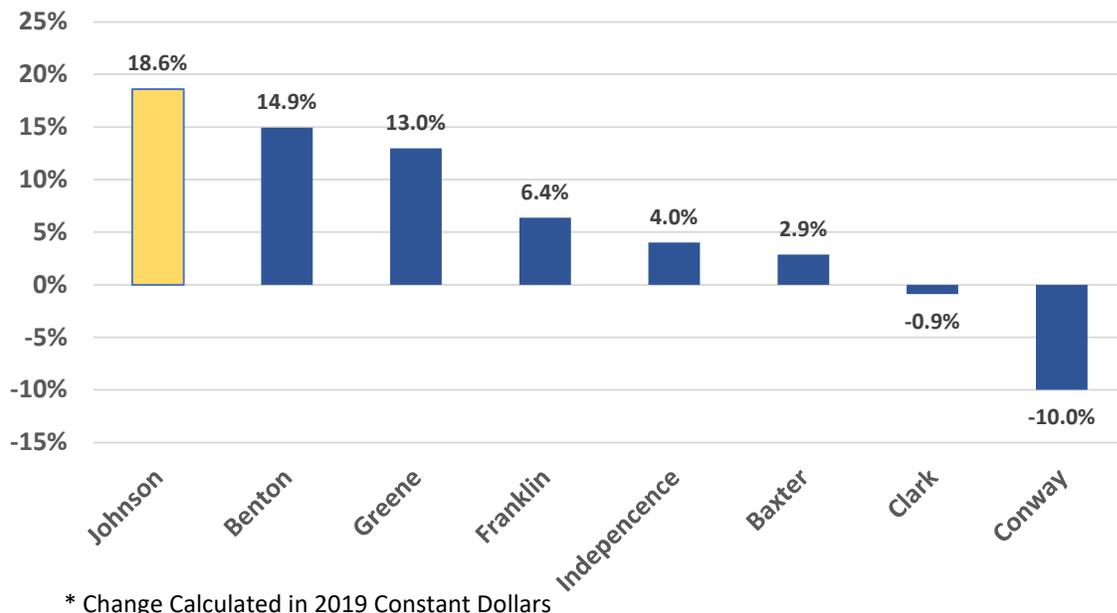


Although Johnson County had the lowest per capita property assessments in 2019, the county had the highest growth in assessments from 2010 to 2019 among the comparison counties. Property assessments increased nearly 19%, after adjusting for inflation in Johnson County compared to an average (mean) growth among comparison counties of only 6%. Two counties (Conway and Clark) experienced declines during this nine-year period, -10% and -1% respectively (Figure 23).

Similarly, property assessments in Clarksville grew more than other benchmark cities, except Paragould during that time. Clarksville property assessments grew 9.4% compared to an average of about 5.5% from 2010 to 2019. Only Paragould had a higher rate of growth (13%) during this period.

Figure 23. Percent Change in Property Assessments 2010-2019

Source: Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department



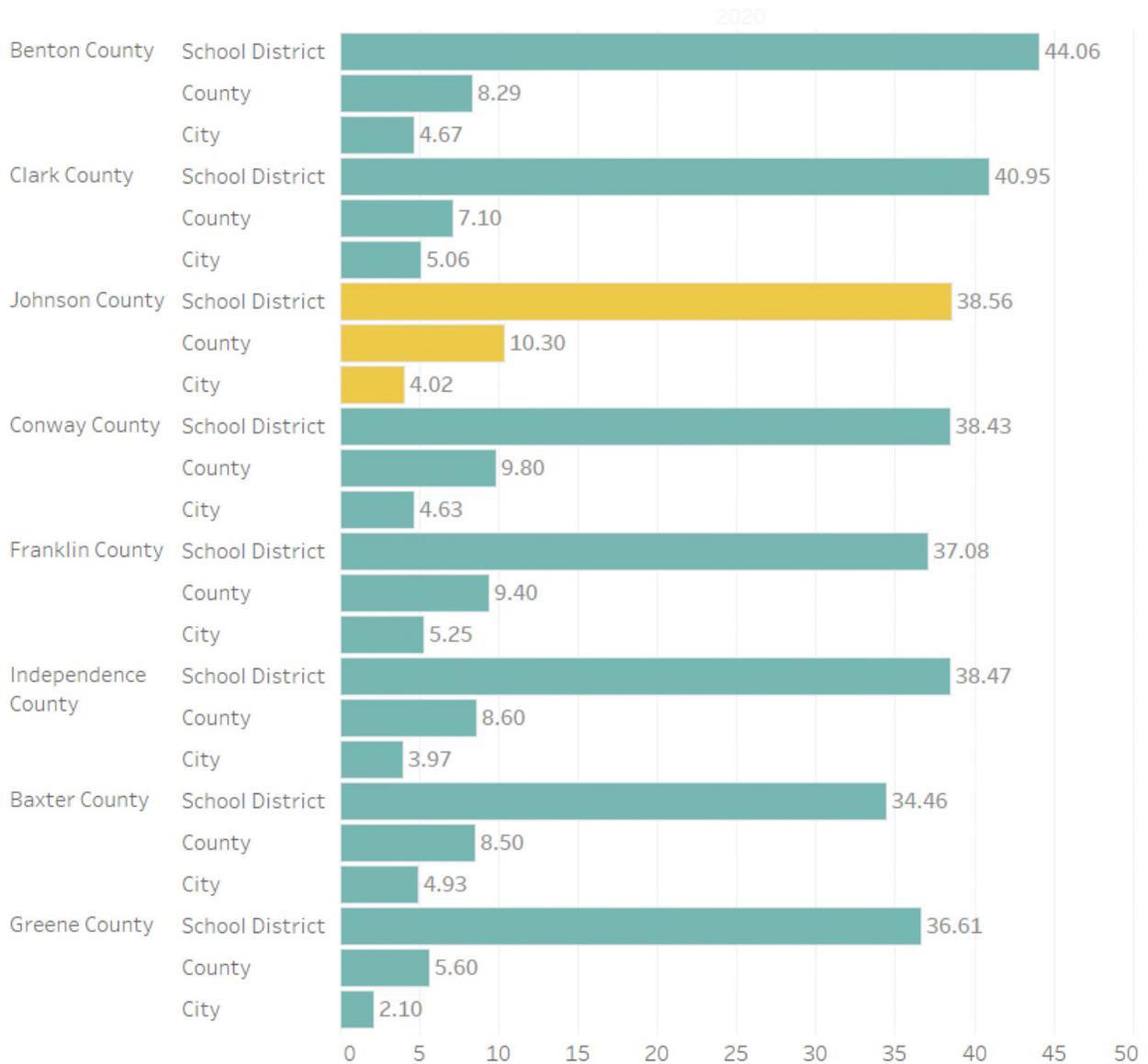
Property Tax Millage

The effort to collect revenue from the property tax as measured by millage rates for comparison school districts, cities and counties is shown in Figure 24. The average millage rate of school districts in Johnson County is near the average of school districts in the comparison counties. The City of Clarksville’s millage (4.02) is slightly less than the comparison city average of 4.37. However, the Johnson County government millage of 10.3 is somewhat higher than the average of the comparison counties, which is 8.2.

The average total millage in Johnson County for school districts, cities and the county is only slightly higher (50.7) compared to the average of the comparison counties (49.4). Therefore, the effort to raise revenue from the property tax is similar to comparison counties.

Figure 24. Property Tax Millage 2020

Source: Arkansas Assessment Coordination Department



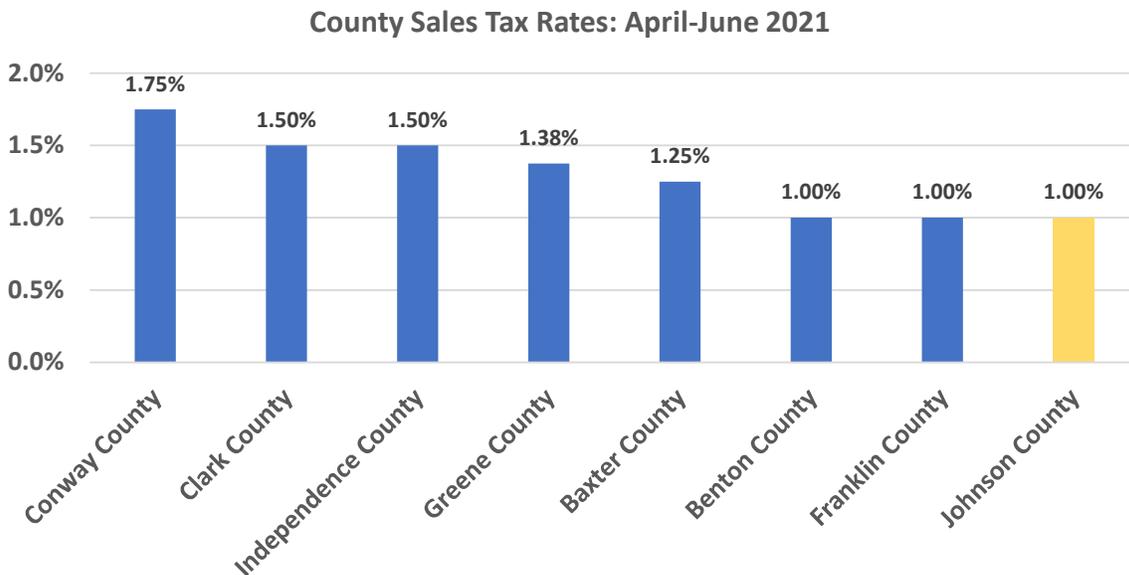
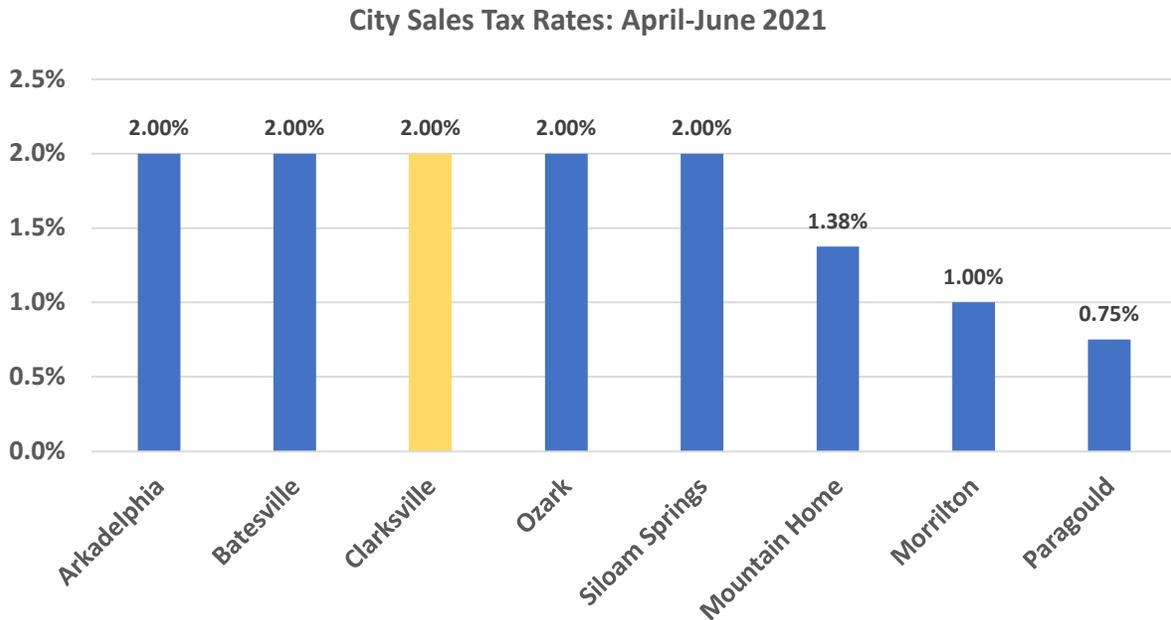
Sales Tax Rates

The effort to generate revenue from retail and service sales as measured by the sales tax rate is higher in Clarksville (2%) compared to the average of the comparison cities (1.6%). Four of the comparison cities also have a 2% city sales tax (Figure 25). Paragould’s sales tax (0.75%) is the lowest.

Johnson County’s sales tax rate of 1% is among the lowest of the comparison counties and somewhat less than the average of 1.34%. Conway County ranks the highest at 1.75%.

Figure 25. Sales Tax Rates 2021

Source: Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration



The Johnson County government has among the lowest sales tax rates, but a higher-than-average millage. Unlike the County, Clarksville has among the highest sales tax rates and a somewhat lower millage than comparison cities.

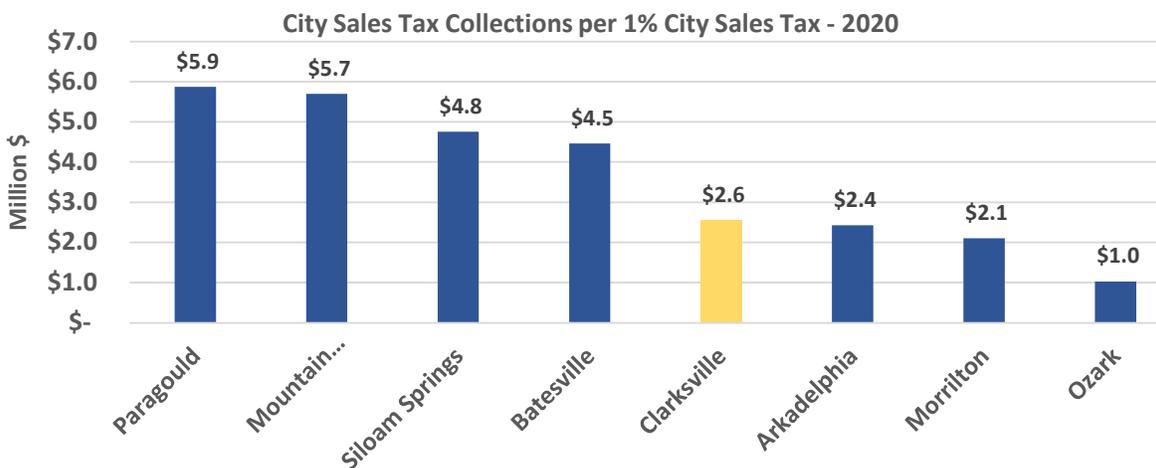
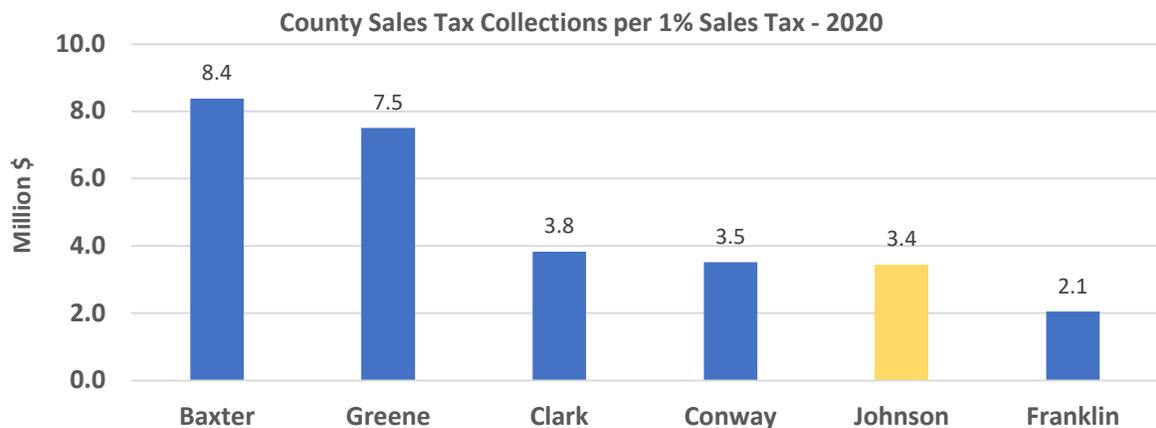
Sales Tax Revenue

Johnson County generated approximately the same revenue per a 1% sales tax as did Conway County and slightly less than Clark County in 2020 (Figure 26). Both counties have smaller populations than Johnson County, which suggests a potential for generating additional revenue by encouraging residents to shop local. Among the comparison counties, Franklin County is the only county that generates less revenue per a 1% county sales tax.

The amount of revenue generated from a 1% city sales tax is highly related to the population of the city. The exceptions are Mountain Home and Batesville, who generate more revenue per capita than the other six cities. Clarksville collected slightly more revenue from a 1% sales tax than Arkadelphia, a city of with a similar size population.

Figure 26. Sales Tax Revenue Per 1% of Sales Tax 2020

Source: Calculated with data from the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration



Entrepreneurship Programs/Support

Several benchmark cities have dedicated programs for general entrepreneurial support. Many utilize local institutions of higher education if they have them. For example, Arkadelphia has the Henderson State University Small Business Technology Development Center, which helps businesses with basics like business plan development and financials. Mountain Home has a newly opened business help center on their college campus (ASU), called the Small Business and Tech Development Center. This center employs a dedicated person to help new businesses through their planning and technical issues.

Few benchmark cities have even informal collaboration with minority communities for business development. None reported a specific economic development or entrepreneurial program targeting minority residents. However, the Batesville Chamber of Commerce works with the ESL director of the school district to place bilingual student interns in the chamber offices. Some cities face obstacles with funding and staffing a dedicated team of entrepreneurship support of any kind. Some plan to move towards a volunteer-based system to cut costs.

Leadership Programs

Many benchmark cities host a leadership program. Most have small class sizes and are 9-12 months in length. The most common topics covered in these programs are state and local government education, leadership skills, communication skills, tourism, team building, public health, quality of life, and education (k-12 and higher education). Many programs also have curriculum on local history and regional issues and opportunities facing the community. Leadership programs usually include education about government inner workings, including visits to city, county, and state government offices to meet officials. The benefits of local leadership programs as described by benchmark cities also include networking opportunities with elected officials, business leaders, healthcare professionals, educators, engineers, and law enforcement.

Community Engagement

Visibility of Investments

Community leaders in several benchmark cities described successful community engagement strategies. Several cities built economic development support by increasing visibility of investments and programs and opening communication between leadership and constituents.

For example, Batesville City leaders report that investments in beautification projects encouraged millions in private investments, including extensive remodeling of an existing restaurant, downtown loft apartments, and a historic theater. City leaders estimate that, after the beautification program, downtown storefronts went from 75% to 95% occupancy.

Morrilton also emphasized the importance of visible investments, even for minor projects. The visibility of these projects and investments were promoted aggressively through daily social media communications, regular radio talks, and council meetings. Providing visibility to city investments resulted in increased private investments in new business projects.

Arkadelphia also used various media to get the message out about what they do, why they do it, and the successes of local projects. Social media, email blasts and press releases were the primary means of communication with the community. The feedback was very positive when residents were educated about what the economic development organization is doing to improve quality of life in the area.

Similarly, Mountain Home uses its community development documents created through Baxter County Forward as living documents to sustain community involvement. Siloam Springs is developing a plan to create a local municipal broadband provider due to a lack of private sector investments in high-speed broadband. This idea was very well received by the community. It is intended to improve broadband service and lower the price.

Identifying Champions

Cities also built buy-in by engaging dedicated project champions. Batesville built community buy-in for their downtown beautification efforts by engaging partners. A dedicated champion of the project, a former admiral, was essential to promoting the efforts. He and the local banks worked together, brought in a planner for the street redesigns, and recruited volunteers and private donors. The admiral spearheaded it and got volunteers to sponsor each block, 100% paid for by private donations and required no tax revenue. This has fundamentally changed the market for downtown real estate. Main street is now “the place to be.”

Shifting the Mindset

Another important strategy was changing the mindset of the community members and stakeholders. One city reported that getting the community on board with economic development required building a common understanding of economic development goals and how they evolve. For this city, economic development is no longer just about bringing in industry, it is about developing small local businesses. Helping the community make this shift required patience and consistency.

Another city reported that although the older generation of leadership were reluctant to accept changes necessary for economic development, the older generation of the general population embraced and desired change. The reluctance for change came from leadership, not from citizens. Furthermore, another city discussed the evolution of the city council attitude towards investing in the community. City leadership described a situation where the council was initially reluctant to make major investments but evolved after seeing that “spending money works” and generates new business momentum.

Getting Everyone at the Same Table

It was important for several benchmark cities to have representatives from all parts of the community at the table when developing economic development programs. One city described a triad of groups that must be catered to without favoritism: retirees, tourists, and young working families.

The City of Mountain Home is investing in a branding study that is bringing a lot of community leaders and representatives together at the same table and is creating buzz. This group includes community members ranging from local institutions like hospitals, schools, and resorts.

Only a few benchmark cities have efforts dedicated specifically to engaging with minority populations and business owners. However, Arkadelphia has a Racial and Cultural Diversity Committee, which was created in 2011 and its members represent diverse groups in the community. The Committee focuses on modeling, education, and policy development.

VIII. Downtown Development

Signage and Marketing

Several benchmark cities prioritize marketing efforts, including signage, to promote downtown activities. Batesville has a dedicated marketing and media director that will continue to promote both Batesville and Independence County, with an emphasis on having the city and county work together. In Batesville, advertising and promotion tax revenue from hotels and restaurants fund downtown promotion efforts including wayfinding signage. The wayfinding signage initiative was a successful program, and helps locate main street, the local college, community center, hospital and downtown. Batesville also has a historic district that protects the facades.

Entertainment

Providing a unique entertainment experience was a key strategy in Mountain Home. The City of Mountain Home established the first entertainment district in Arkansas known as “The District”. The District is used to promote events such as Friday Night Live hosted by the Mountain Home Chamber of Commerce and the Baxter Summer Concert Series, which has featured local talent and headliners such as Justin Moore, Thompson Square, and Heath Sanders.

Fostering Relationships

Several benchmark cities reported that partnerships with other groups and a focus on personal relationships were important for their business promotion. Siloam Springs partnered with Main Street Siloam Springs to support and promote downtown businesses through an annual contract. Multiple benchmark cities report an emphasis on personal relationships to recruit business. Local leaders personally and proactively reach out to new business owners.

Reducing Barriers to Renovations

The city of Morrilton removed barriers to remodeling buildings to encourage new business operations. Morrilton city leadership prioritized making renovations easier and more affordable, especially for historic buildings. They removed the historic commission, which had reportedly increased costs for remodeling older buildings.

City Beautification

The most common beautification program among benchmark cities was streetscaping, with several areas placing an emphasis on walkability and sidewalks.

- Arkadelphia maintains and cleans their local streetscape on a weekly basis. The street scaping investments have been developed over the last 10 years. The plan includes a focus on walkability downtown, softening edges, and distinguishing intersections with stamped concrete. The city of Arkadelphia also maintains a small “pocket park” and banner program downtown.
- Batesville has an organization dedicated to streetscaping every block on downtown Main Street. Each block has a private sponsor to fund the program and volunteers in the community maintain the flower beds. This program, which started in 2012 and completed in 2016, has been very successful.

- Paragould reestablished the City Beautiful program, which has identified areas to work on. They are a “Tree City” and have set aside monies to help plant trees and beautify the city-owned cemetery.
- The City of Morrilton has built new sidewalks and recently added flower beds, including 100 roses for the Rotary’s 100-year anniversary.
- The City of Ozark has a City Street Department which provides general streetscape maintenance and upkeep.
- Mountain Home recently passed a 3/4 cent sales tax to fund a park project, including new playgrounds and a new community center.

Litter control and area cleanup programs were also popular beautification efforts among the benchmark cities.

- The City of Morrilton and Conway County hold a county-wide clean up twice a year. This was in response to dump sites on the side of the road and has been in practice for 20 years.
- Arkadelphia works informally with the local Rotary to maintain the town entrance appearance and litter pick up.
- The City of Ozark has a City Street Department which provides clean-up services by emptying public trashcans among other services.

Tourism and Retiree Attraction

Most benchmark cities reported tourism as a major part of their economy, and some have focused on the importance of branding. One city has recently hired a company to perform a branding study of the area. Many cities express the need for people living outside the area to know what the city “is about”.

Batesville reported a strong dependency on tourism that is bolstered by chamber partnerships. The city relies on social media to promote their brand and attract visitors. The city branded itself as the Christmas Light Capital of Arkansas, and reports that this effort has garnered support from community members and local businesses, resulting in a quarter of a million visitors each holiday season. This unique destination has drawn tourists from across Arkansas and other states. Siloam Springs also has a semi-seasonal tourist economy due to their annual Dogwood Festival, which attracts 30 to 35 thousand people.

Mountain Home promotes tourism through marketing efforts and chamber promotions. Although they advertise online and through radio, many visitors find out about the area through word of mouth. Many visitors have been visiting for generations.

Morrilton also reported the importance of tourism to their economy, especially as the “gateway to Petit Jean Mountain”. The city is looking to take more advantage of the hundreds of thousands of people who drive through every year towards Petit Jean and to find ways to bring them downtown. Morrilton is looking to implement downtown amenities like a stage and areas for farmers markets.

Few of the benchmark cities have a dedicated effort to attract retirees. However, some cities report that they are successful retiree destinations despite lacking specific promotional efforts. Many cities report amenities that are desirable to retirees like high quality of life, retail shopping opportunities, safe communities, natural beauty, and quality medical centers. Mountain Home is working on becoming a certified retirement community and creating a retiree guide.

IX. Lessons Learned by Benchmark Cities

Many benchmark cities reported some pitfalls to watch out for and general lessons learned. These are some key takeaways:

- Beware of a lack of continuity among leadership. Some areas have suffered because of high turnover from people in economic development leadership positions. This makes it difficult to have a consistent message and plan.
- When branding and advertising, be careful not to emphasize one group over another. For example, when trying to improve quality of life to attract retirees, be sure not to neglect younger residents and working families.
- Focus on turning around bad attitudes. Every town has people resistant to change. Getting everyone to focus on the positives can be a game changer. Making this change takes consistent communication and promoting early successful investments.
- Keep the dirt turning and make visible investments. People will want to invest if they can see obvious activity and buzz in the community. One city started investing money sidewalks, streets, and fire stations, which created a domino effect of outside investments in businesses and renovations.
- Grow residential housing stock through infill instead of annexations. Annexation has large overhead costs, such as gravel, extending sewer lines, and impact fees. It also stretches thin other city services like police and fire. Infill also encourages the stores that generate sales tax revenue to be located in town, not a mile out of town.
- Use beautification efforts to encourage people to maintain up their own properties, instead of relying just on code enforcement. One city reported that people started sprucing up their properties when they saw the city making investments.

X. APPENDIX I: Industrial Sites & Buildings

Batesville and Independence County report 6 industrial sites or buildings, and report that all have utilities. Acreage ranges from 10 to 60 acres, and square footage ranges from around 12,000 to around 104,000.

1. Woodland Commercial Lots
Southside, Independence County, AR
21 Acres
2. Bryant
Batesville, Independence County, AR
60 Acres
3. BICED Taylor
Batesville, Independence County, AR
20.55 Acres
4. 2100 N. St. Louis St. Hwy 167
Batesville, Independence County, AR
10.12 Acres
5. Hexion Specialty Chemical Company
Batesville, Independence County, AR
11,926 Sq Ft
6. Grace Pole Plant
Batesville, Independence County, AR
104,118 Sq Ft

Paragould reports that the 78.77-acre South Industrial Site is shovel ready with all utilities already connected to the property.

1. Paragould - Dennington/Highway 69
Paragould, Greene County, AR
30 Acres
2. Paragould South Industrial Site
Paragould, Greene County, AR
78.77 Acres

Arkadelphia has 5 industrial sites or buildings, with one technology park with 42 acres and square footage ranging from 55,000 to 345,000.

1. Atkinson - Complex
Arkadelphia, Clark County, AR
121,800 Sq Ft
2. University Plaza
Arkadelphia, Clark County, AR
1,800 Sq Ft
3. Clark County Business & Technology Park
Arkadelphia, Clark County, AR
42 Acres

4. Danfoss Building
Arkadelphia, Clark County, AR
345,000 Sq Ft
5. Food Processing Building
Arkadelphia, Clark County, AR
55,000 Sq Ft

Mountain Home has 4 industrial sites ranging from about 16 acres to 100 acres.

1. MOUN001
Mountain Home, Baxter County, AR
65 Acres
2. Wotawa LLC Site
Mountain Home, Baxter County, AR
28.63 Acres
3. Rossi Road
Mountain Home, Baxter County, AR
16.17 Acres
4. HWY 62/412 BYPASS
Mountain Home, Baxter County, AR
100 Acres

Siloam Springs has 5 industrial sites or buildings, including one building with over 240,000 square feet and industrial sites with acreage ranging from about 20 acres to 200 acres.

1. DMT Services Inc. (Old Franklin Building)
Siloam Springs, Benton County, AR
240,589 Sq Ft
2. SILOAM003
Siloam Springs, Benton County, AR
27.57 Acres
3. SILO002
Siloam Springs, Benton County, AR
200 Acres
4. Siloam Springs Industrial Park 1
Siloam Springs, Benton County, AR
29 Acres
5. SILOAM004
Siloam Springs, Benton County, AR
19.53 Acres

Morrilton has 9 industrial sites or buildings, with acreage ranging from 1.8 acres to 40 acres and square footage ranging from 2,680 square feet to over 31,000 square feet.

1. Harding Heights of Morrilton
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
Acres

2. MORR003
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
28 Acres
3. May Hope Moose Industrial Park - Site B
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
22 Acres
4. May Hope Moose Industrial Park - Site A
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
40 Acres
5. 830 Highway 247
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
31,300 Sq Ft
6. Morrilton Restaurant Building Near I-40
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
2,680 Sq Ft
7. Morrilton Call Center Building
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
31,030 Sq Ft
8. JC Penney Building
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
7,766 Sq Ft
9. Morrilton Industrial Building Hwy 113 West
Morrilton, Conway County, AR
26,000 Sq Ft

xI. APPENDIX II: Top Ten Employers in Benchmark Cities

Ozark

- 1 - Butterball, LLC
- 2- Ozark School District
- 3-Baldor Electric Company
- 4-Bank of the Ozarks (multiple locations)
- 5-Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative Corporation
- 6-Ozark Nursing Home, Inc
- 7-Charleston School District
- 8-Walmart Stores, Inc. (2 locations)
- 9-Greenhurst Nursing Center
- 10-CV's Family Foods, Inc. (IGA)

Batesville

- 1- White River Health System
- 2- Petco Foods
- 3- Ozark Mountain Poultry
- 4- Bad Boy
- 5- White River Area Agency on Aging
- 6- Future Fuel Company
- 7- Batesville Public Schools
- 8- Network of Community Options
- 9- First Community Bank
- 10- Walmart Supercenter

Paragould

- 1 - American Railcar Industries, Inc. (2 locations)
- 2- Tenneco, Inc. (Monroe Auto Equipment Company)
- 3-Anchor Packaging (3 locations)
- 4-Utility Trailer Manufacturing Company

- 5-Arkansas Methodist Medical Center
- 6-Greene County Tech School
- 7-Paragould School District
- 8-Walmart Stores, Inc.
- 9-Nidec Motor Corporation
- 10-Martin Sprocket & Gear, Inc.

Arkadelphia

- 1 - Henderson State University
- 2- Georgia Pacific Corporation
- 3-Ouachita Baptist University
- 4-Arkadelphia School District
- 5-Walmart Stores, Inc.
- 6-Securitas Security Service USA
- 7-Baptist Health Medical Center
- 8-Danfoss LLC
- 9-Anthony Timberlands, Inc.
- 10-Dawson Educational Co-Op

Mountain Home

- 1 - Baxter Regional Medical Center (2 locations)
- 2- Baxter Healthcare Corporation
- 3-Mountain Home School District
- 4-American Stitchco, Inc
- 5-Walmart Stores, Inc
- 6-Eaton Corporation (Aeroquip Hose Division)
- 7-Harp's Food Stores, Inc. (2 locations)
- 8-Arkansas State University – Mountain Home
- 9-Lowe's Companies, Inc.
- 10-Magness Oil Company (multiple locations)

Siloam Springs

- 1 - Walmart Stores, Inc. (multiple locations)

- 2- J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc
- 3-Rogers School District
- 4-Mercy Health System of Northwest Arkansas
- 5-Bentonville School District
- 6-Simmons Foods, Inc. (multiple locations)
- 7-McKee Foods Corporation
- 8-Arvest Bank Group (multiple locations)
- 9-Tyson Foods, Inc. (multiple locations)
- 10-Ozark Mountain Poultry, Inc.

Morrilton

- 1 - Green Bay Packaging, Inc. (2 locations)
- 2- South Conway County School District
- 3-Walmart Stores, Inc.
- 4-University of Arkansas Community College - Morrilton E
- 5-Arch Ford Educational Service Cooperative
- 6-ESS Transportation, Inc
- 7-Wayne Smith Trucking, Inc.
- 8-Hixson Lumber Sales, Inc.
- 9-CHI St. Vincent - Morrilton
- 10-Semco, Inc.

XII. APPENDIX III: Employment by Sector and County 2019

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

		Benton County	Baxter County	Independe nce County	Greene County	Clark County	Johnson County	Conway County	Franklin County
Nonfarm employment	2010	119,295	20,177	20,053	17,597	12,440	10,749	9,478	6,098
	2019	165,226	21,313	20,848	20,666	12,473	10,637	9,289	6,581
Private nonfarm employment	2010	109,251	18,100	17,395	15,324	9,672	9,418	7,853	4,976
	2019	153,764	19,450	18,504	18,389	9,861	9,382	7,569	5,422
Manufacturing	2010	12,123	2,135	3,849	4,446	1,961	2,961	961	895
	2019	12,824	2,533	3,550	5,269	1,403	2,539	1,039	1,017
Government and government enterprises	2010	10,044	2,077	2,658	2,273	2,768	1,331	1,625	1,122
	2019	11,462	1,863	2,344	2,277	2,612	1,255	1,720	1,159
Retail trade	2010	10,918	2,685	2,116	1,966	1,367	1,148	1,058	637
	2019	15,459	2,840	2,237	2,371	1,393	1,060	993	766
State and local	2010	8,495	1,717	2,331	1,986	2,566	1,116	1,453	880
	2019	9,894	1,555	2,100	2,008	2,443	1,072	1,583	930
Local government	2010	7,018	1,266	1,571	1,567	982	973	924	745
	2019	8,415	1,147	1,391	1,601	940	967	1,052	730
Farm employment	2010	2,450	588	1,113	946	398	667	944	861
	2019	2,335	521	995	918	350	634	860	827
Accommodation and food services	2010	7,798	1,548	1,076	1,061	1,034	527	451	
	2019	12,461	1,698	1,302	1,397	1,223	649	477	
Other services (except govt and govt enterprises)	2010	6,468	1,444	1,366	952	652	514	530	372
	2019	8,890	1,477	1,344	1,218	670	561	583	389
Construction	2010	6,220	1,448	961	806	349	360	908	358
	2019	9,684	1,160	980	949	367	518	763	357
Admin, support, waste mgmt & remediation services	2010			834	1,017			691	
	2019		1,030	1,367	988	532	529		442
Finance and insurance	2010	3,949	816	638	550	347	266	260	284
	2019	5,376	1,013	747	808	419	239	312	156
Real estate and rental and leasing	2010	4,399	1,032	550	481	311	232	254	158
	2019	6,655	1,069	586	730	347	242	313	145
Wholesale trade	2010	5,451	242	519	558	86	357	266	94
	2019	8,006	268	396	584	76	86	195	87
Professional, scientific, and technical services	2010	8,169	782			410	179	199	181
	2019	13,503				357	184		
State government	2010	1,477	451	760	419	1,584	143	529	135
	2019	1,479	408	709	407	1,503	105	531	200
Military	2010	994	184	161	187	91	112	94	80
	2019	1,077	161	143	174	77	101	80	67
Federal civilian	2010	555	176	166	100	111	103	78	162
	2019	491	147	101	95	92	82	57	162
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2010	1,731	282	111	108	113	67	72	
	2019	2,943	272	131	125	139	69	94	
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2010			243	37	22	99	223	
	2019	326	89					61	192
Information	2010	1,042	265	155	135	42	47	21	35
	2019	1,483	224	132	215	20	30	27	41
Forestry, fishing, and related activities	2010				129	340	64	140	
	2019	492	126					230	157
Management of companies and enterprises	2010							0	
	2019					71	0	0	
Utilities	2010	303	68	192	27	58		31	244
	2019	364	57	165	29	50		44	210
Transportation and warehousing	2010	8,621	282	825	361	262		599	152
	2019	12,432	300	773	518	276		546	155
Health care and social assistance	2010	8,391	3,800	3,085	1,936			1,011	
	2019	12,371	4,262		2,269				632
Educational services	2010	2,030	92	347	204			178	
	2019	2,849	122		234				50



United States Department of Agriculture, University of Arkansas, and County Governments Cooperating.

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