

Photography by John Owen



## BENTONVILLE BLUEPRINT September 2014



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## INTRODUCTION

By any measure, Bentonville has transformed dramatically over the lifetimes of many of its residents – how much, depends on how long the observer has lived or worked in Bentonville. The focus of this project, development of an economic development strategic plan for the City of Bentonville deemed Bentonville Blueprint, is driven by the myriad visions of Bentonville's leaders, residents and stakeholders of what Bentonville can and should strive to be for those lucky enough to call it home.

As noted by many stakeholders in interviews and online surveys, Bentonville is "like no other place." "Unique" is a word in which the use is often advised against

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**BENTONVILLE IS  
EXCEPTIONAL!**

in the context of communities and regional assets, but in Bentonville's case, it is appropriate. However, through the stakeholder input, discussions and debates surrounding this project, another word has presented itself as the best descriptor for Bentonville and its many assets – Exceptional. From the work ethic of its original citizens, to the early growth of Walmart, to the arrival of the 1,500 vendors and culminating with the opening of Crystal Bridges and associated amenities downtown, Bentonville has evolved into something truly exceptional, with exceptional opportunities for its' future. How Bentonville responds to this potential is the thrust of this Blueprint.

There are multiple perspectives from which one can view the city and how it should proceed moving forward. One stakeholder said it was "probably the smallest town you can find with a big city feel." This observation acknowledges the reality that Bentonville is no longer a stand-alone municipality, but an integral part of a regional economy. It is important to note that Bentonville must and will continue to play a vital and collaborative role within the regional economic development context, but it is equally important for the regional economy for Bentonville to strive to develop its own infrastructure, assets and amenities in a way that enhances its development and complements regional growth.

In this context, Bentonville is, as one stakeholder noted, "an exceptional neighborhood within a large city." This view recognizes the interdependency between Bentonville and its Northwest Arkansas partners and the need to continue to strive to be the best "neighborhood" in the region to live, work and enjoy. This perspective does not diminish the importance of the city, but simply acknowledges the regional economics and focuses Bentonville's attention on how to leverage its own exceptional assets to be the location of choice for the companies, talent and families it desires. Although this perspective should challenge many of the assumptions previously made in the community, it does enable Bentonville to maintain the "small town feel" of a neighborhood that many interviewees stated is important.



*AN INCOMPLETE INVENTORY OF BENTONVILLE'S ASSETS REVEALS:*

# EXCEPTIONAL

COMPANY

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DOWNTOWN

LEADERSHIP

MUSEUMS

MUSEUM HOTEL

PEOPLE

PHILANTHROPY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RESTAURANTS

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

TRAIL AND PARK SYSTEM

*Not only is Bentonville exceptional because of the above but it is also exceptional based on its demographics, which include:*

- Population growth of 5.2 percent between 2000 and 2010 and projected growth of 2.74 percent from 2013 through 2018.
- A very low median age of 31.9 as compared to the U.S. and Arkansas average of 37.6 and 37.8, respectively.
- A low unemployment rate of 4.4 percent as compared to the U.S. and Arkansas average of 5.9 and 6.1, respectively (April 2014).
- Projected job growth of 13.9 percent between 2013 and 2018, as compared to the U.S. and Arkansas average of 6 percent and 4 percent, respectively.
- Per capita income of \$28,882 as of 2013, as compared to the U.S. and Arkansas average of \$27,567 and \$21,880, respectively.
- High educational attainment for Bentonville residents 25 years of age and older with 43.7 percent having an associates degree or higher as compared to the U.S. (36 percent) and Arkansas (25.7 percent).
- Quality public school system with a high ACT Composite score of 22 compared to the state average of 20.2

The uniqueness of Bentonville renders it impossible to identify any other communities across the United States that could serve as valid models to emulate. Rather, Bentonville should examine its own assets, opportunities and potential and set its own course for the future.



In addition to leveraging its exceptional assets, Bentonville should work equally hard to mitigate its challenges and fill voids in its economic development inventory. Through the course of this project, the following opportunities have been identified:

## ENHANCE

- The overall economic development delivery system
- The business retention program
- The entrepreneurial support system
- The real estate offerings to future prospects – office and industrial
- The footprint of downtown and connectivity to it from offices and residences
- The relationship between the city and the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport
- Bentonville's "Northern Gateway" along North Walton Boulevard
- The attractiveness of Bentonville to young professionals
- The benefits and offerings of arts, culture, entertainment and retail
- And promote the city's sustainability efforts
- The diversity of the economy through targeted efforts in digital media; hospitality, culture and entertainment; light advanced manufacturing; retail supplier regional offices; retail technologies; specialty retail; and transportation and warehousing

BENTONVILLE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HISTORY CAN BE SIMPLISTICALLY DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL DISTINCT PHASES AS OUTLINED BELOW.



The self-reliant, hardscrabble town of farmers and independent businesses; otherwise known as "pre-Walmart."

The exponential growth of Walmart.

The arrival of the Walmart vendors and the associated efforts to meet their expectations throughout the community up to the present.

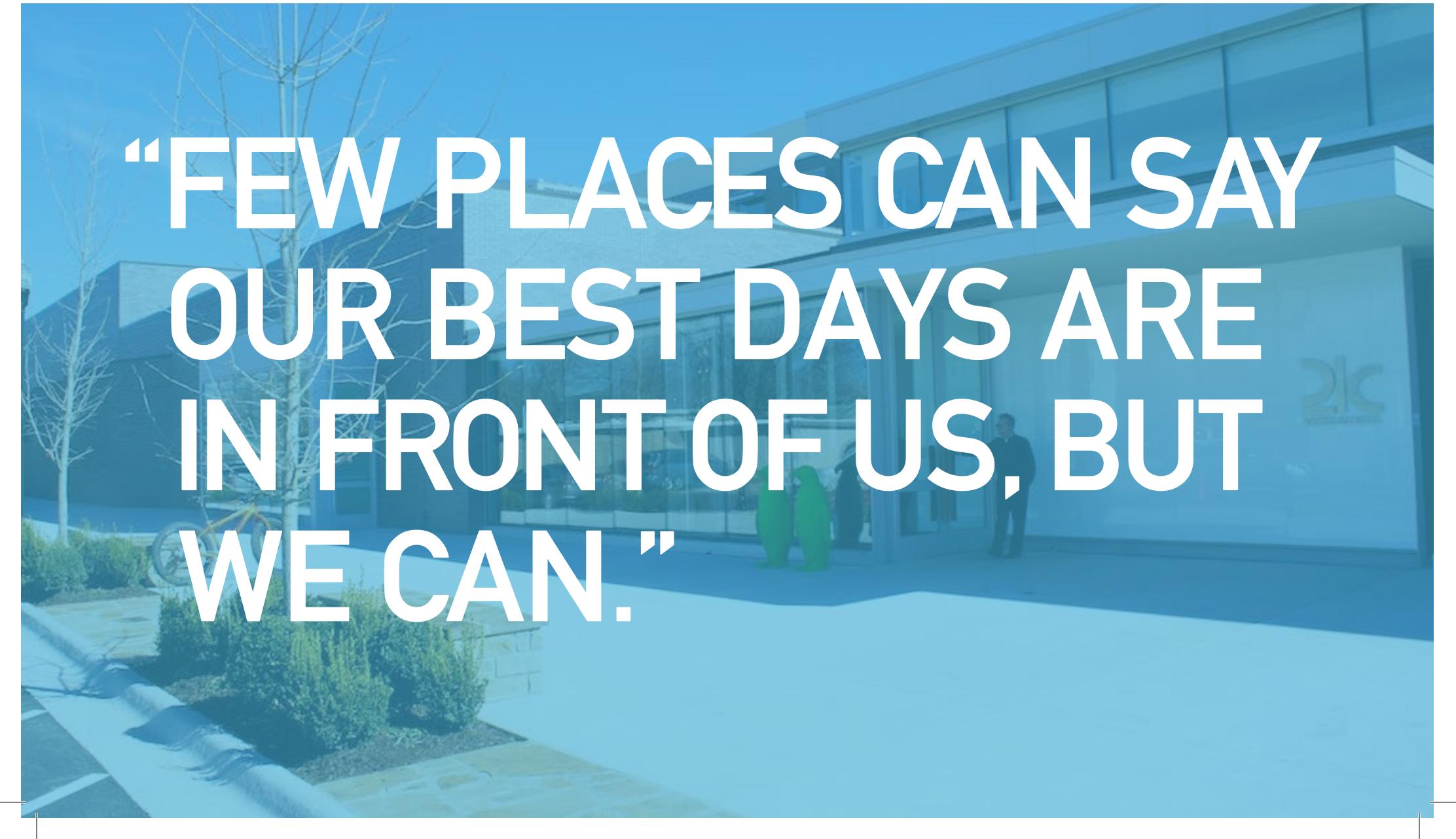
The redevelopment of downtown and development and opening of Crystal Bridges.

The focus of this project will be a more diversified strategy than previous phases.



Although it will continue to entail recruiting new companies to Bentonville, it will be much more organic in its efforts to support entrepreneurs trying to address needs of local companies, adding to the entertainment, cultural and retail fabric of the community to attract and retain the talent that will drive these emerging companies, providing the office and residential product that 21st Century companies and families require, and providing the multi-modal (four wheels, two wheels, two feet) connectivity between all the commercial and residential nodes that will comprise what will be perceived as the "best neighborhood" in Northwest Arkansas.

All of the recommendations in this report are impossible to accomplish at once. However, given high-level visionary leadership, Bentonville can certainly pursue each of these recommendations throughout the five-year Blueprint implementation and further transform the community to the point where future residents will look back and mark these efforts as the point of beginning for Bentonville's economic phase five – which in hindsight, could well be viewed as Bentonville's Renaissance.



**“FEW PLACES CAN SAY  
OUR BEST DAYS ARE  
IN FRONT OF US, BUT  
WE CAN.”**

## TARGET SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

Since Bentonville is unique, its target sector opportunities will differ from a typical city of its size. Seven main target sector opportunities, along with specific focus areas for each have been identified as priorities for Bentonville to focus its efforts over the next five years. The selection of these targets involved the review of: the current targeted sectors of Northwest Arkansas; the current business/industry base in Bentonville and the region, along with location quotients and projected growth rates for such sectors, as applicable; and recent project activity in Bentonville and the region. The key strengths and advantages of Bentonville related to each target was also a significant determinant of whether the sector was a fit. It is important to note that Bentonville may have successes in sectors outside of these identified sectors.



## DIGITAL MEDIA

### SECTOR OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION

Ranging from content marketing to community engagement, digital media encompasses a wide range of businesses in today's marketplace. Software Publishers (NACIS 511210), Graphic Design Services (NACIS 541430) and Internet Publishing and Broadcasting and Web Search Portals (NACIS 519139) should thrive in the Bentonville economy. Focused on facilitating interactive collaboration and communication with companies, consumers, organizations and employees, the Digital Media sector is a growing component of all business sectors. Interrelated, each component of Digital Media is co-dependent of the other.

In January 2013, KSC Kreate, a Hollywood, Florida based digital commerce agency, opened a 10,000 square foot office and production studio in Bentonville. Clients of KSC Create include Walmart, Sam's Club, Gap, Ikea, Bed Bath & Beyond, Canon, Belkin, Graco Baby Products and Newell Rubbermaid.

### SECTOR FOCUS AREAS

- DIGITAL COMMERCE
- E-COMMERCE WEBSITE DESIGN
- PRODUCTION STUDIOS
- SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES
- SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Collective Bias, Inc., which was headquartered in Bentonville but recently moved to Rogers, provides social media and shopper marketing services by creating compelling media about users' products in specific retail channels. Triad Retail Media, which has an office in Rogers currently, creates, manages and operates online media programs for leading retail e-commerce websites delivering custom digital ad campaign opportunities to national brands such as Walmart, ebay, CVS, Sam's Club, Dell Computer and other, to target and engage shoppers. These are just three examples of the types of companies in the Digital Media sector that should be a target of Bentonville.

### SECTOR TRENDS

Companies that have historically not been engaged in digital media are now acquiring companies to enhance their market position and products and services. Service providers, program producers and content aggregators have become more viable as companies further explore their social media options.

### NAICS Codes

- NAICS 511210: SOFTWARE PUBLISHERS
- NAICS 541430: GRAPHIC DESIGN SERVICES
- NAICS 519130: INTERNET PUBLISHING AND BROADCASTING AND WEB SEARCH PORTALS

Additionally, cloud computing has married talent and products or services seamlessly. The Graphic Design Services sector has experienced ongoing technical innovations as new technologies such as wireless devices, social media and video streaming have created new market opportunities. Graphic Design Services has expanded to include niche opportunities in e-Commerce Website Design and comprehensive design for digital media such as movies, gaming and texting. New Internet access platforms and social media companies entering into e-commerce is driving the growth of the Internet Publishing sector.

## LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Healthy companies are indicative of a healthy creative workforce and nothing is truer for the Digital Media sector. Retaining talent to support the Digital Media sector is critical. With key personnel having the ability to work on projects from anywhere in the world, a creative thriving environment and a high earning potential in a geography breeds more success.

The average earnings per job in Benton County in the Digital Media sector is \$130,811. Additionally, Benton County has a higher projected job growth at 25.6 percent compared to the national average of 13.8 percent and the state average of 5.2 percent. The Communication and Arts Division at NorthWest Arkansas Community College offers a variety of courses in Art/Graphic Design, Art History and Communication/Film. Located in the Visual Arts Department, John Brown University in Siloam Springs offers degrees in Digital Cinema, Graphic Design and Art and Illustration. Students are exposed to classroom study, Mac labs and studios and international studies. The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville offers a Bachelor of Arts in Studio

and in Art History as well as a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio and in Art Education. Students are able to receive a concentrated study in Visual Arts, which supports this target.

## LOCATION ASSETS

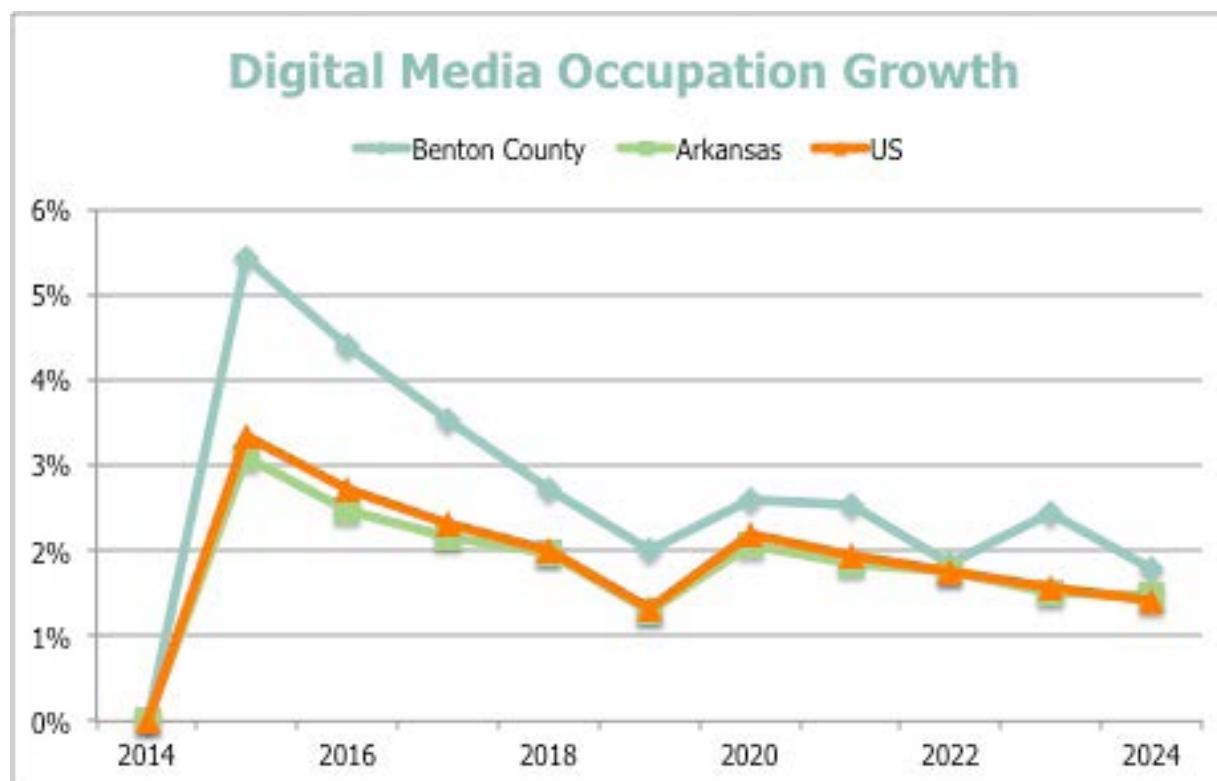
### RETAIL TECHNOLOGIES CONCENTRATION

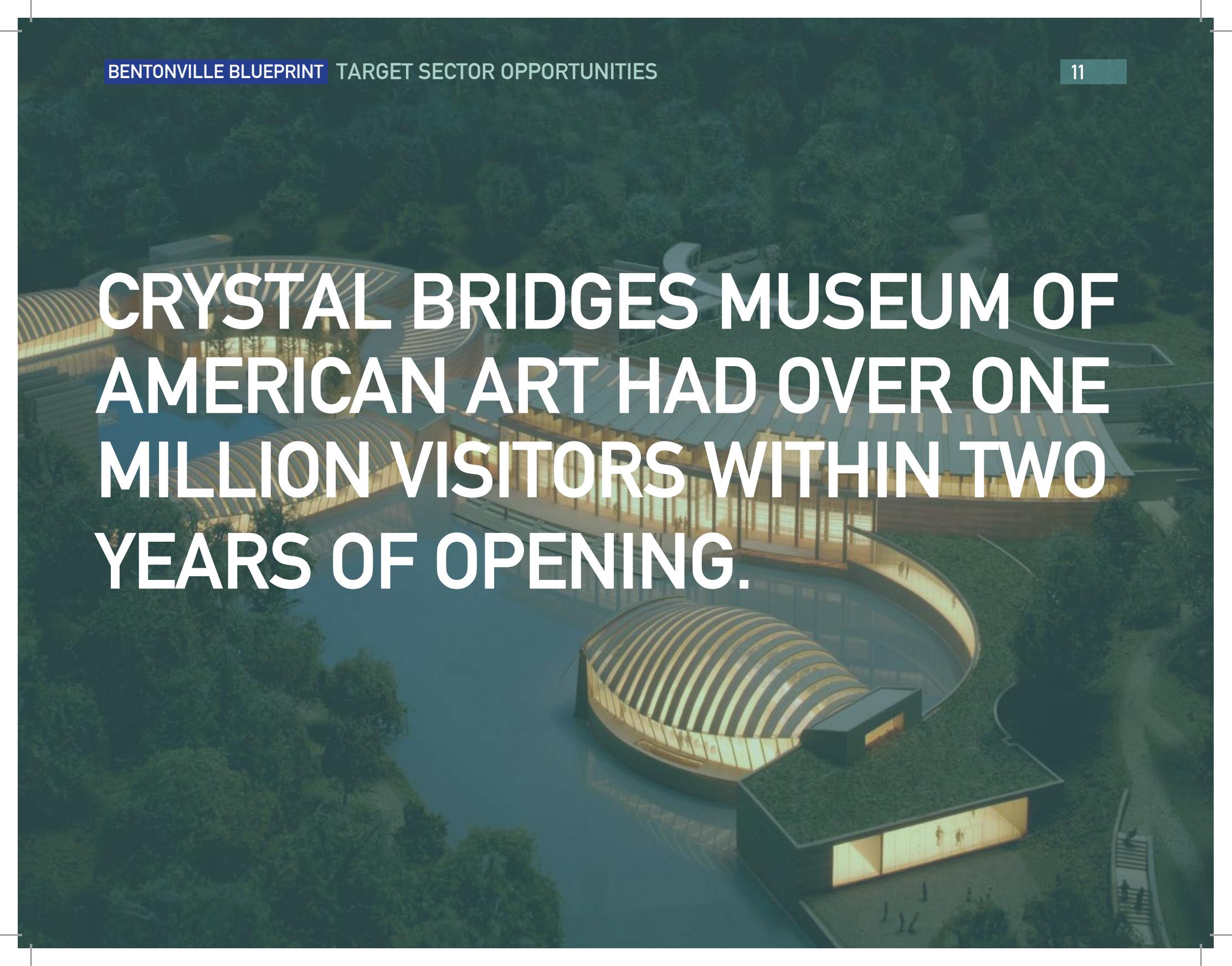
### MEDIAN AGE OF 31.9

### EDUCATED POPULATION (NEARLY 44 PERCENT HAS AN ASSOCIATES DEGREE OR HIGHER)

### ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

- NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- JOHN BROWN UNIVERSITY
- UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS - FAYETTEVILLE





CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART HAD OVER ONE MILLION VISITORS WITHIN TWO YEARS OF OPENING.

## HOSPITALITY, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Hospitality, Culture and Entertainment sector includes a wide range of establishments from lodging, preparing meals and snacks for immediate consumption, producing live performances, preserving exhibit objects and sites of cultural, educational and historical significance.

### SECTOR TRENDS

The Hospitality, Culture and Entertainment sector is dependent on consumer's discretionary spending, as well as the availability of leisure time and disposable income. Personal income in the U.S. increased 3.4 percent in March of 2014 when compared to the same month of 2013. Revenue for the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector in the U.S. rose 3.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2013 compared to the fourth quarter of 2012. According to Hoover's, the industry is projected to grow at an annual compound rate of five percent between 2014 and 2018.

## SECTOR FOCUS AREAS

### HOTELS

### RESTAURANTS (NON-CHAIN)

### LIVE MUSIC VENUES

### ARTS CENTER

The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector and the Accommodations and Food Services sectors are projected to have an increase in jobs of 18.1 percent in Benton County between 2014 and 2019. This is significantly higher than the U.S. projection of 6.7 percent.

## NAICS Codes

### NAICS 71: ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATION

### NAICS 72: ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES

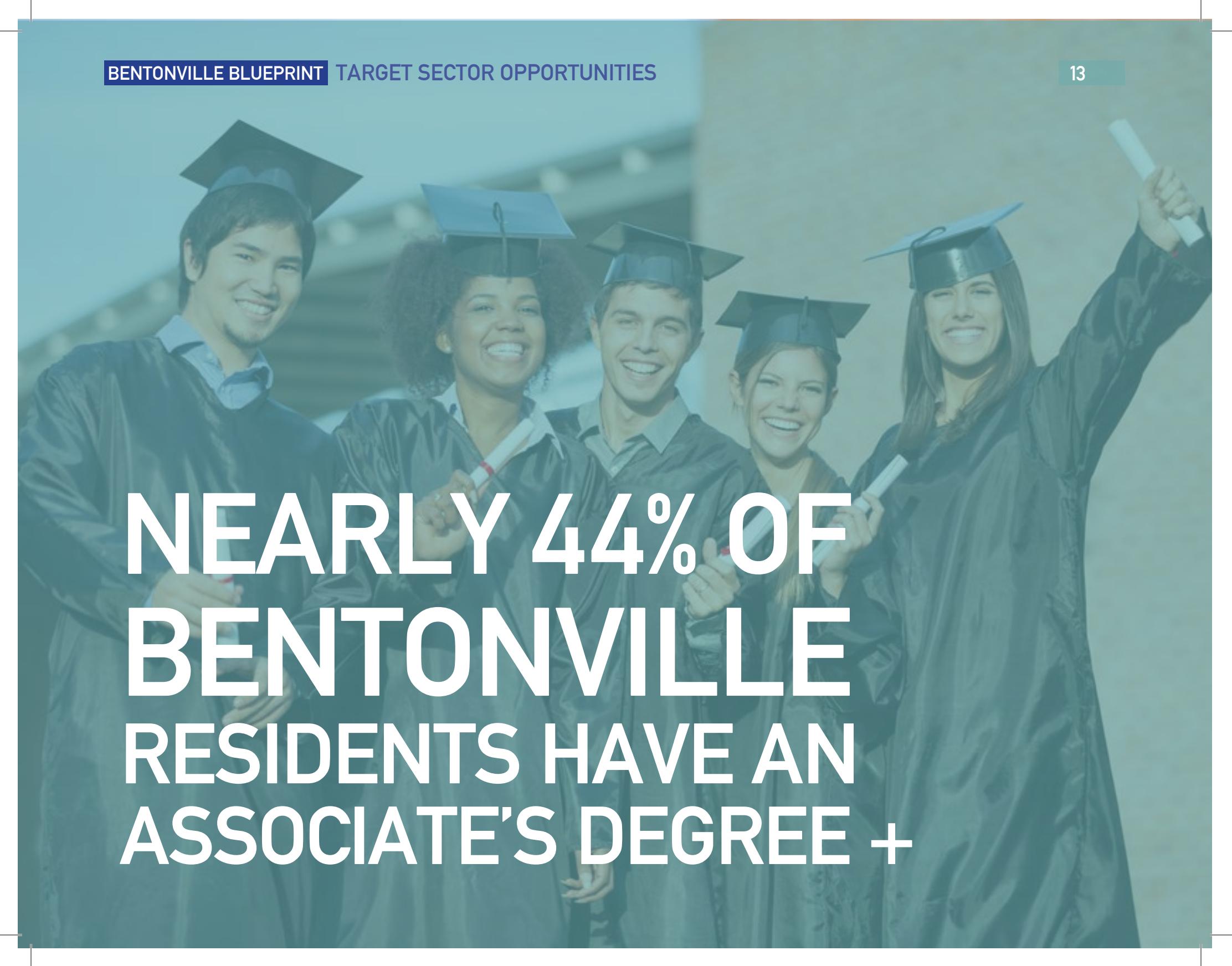
### LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Companies in the Hospitality, Culture and Entertainment sector look at areas with existing tourist attractions as well as airports and major highways. A community's per capita income and educational attainment may also be considerations.

Within less than two years of opening, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art welcomed its one-millionth visitor and nearly half of those visitors were not Arkansas residents. Other unique attractions in Bentonville include 21C Museum and Hotel, Walmart Visitors Center Museum, The Museum of Native American History and the 1875 Peel Mansion & Heritage Gardens. Amazeum, a world class family discovery center and museum, is under construction and scheduled to open in 2015.

Many of these attractions are located on or near the downtown Bentonville Square. The city has plans to extend the town square with an Arts District and Market District. The districts will include shopping, multi-family residential and mixed-use space.

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A group of diverse graduates in caps and gowns, smiling and holding diplomas.

NEARLY 44% OF  
BENTONVILLE  
RESIDENTS HAVE AN  
ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE +

Bentonville is also home to culinary attractions including a 2014 James Beard Award nominee, Chef Matthew McClure at The Hive, inside the 21C Museum and Hotel. NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC) has a Culinary Arts and Hospitality Program that offers a variety of certificate and degree options.

The Shewmaker Center for Global Business at NWACC has a hybrid between a commercial kitchen and a typical television demonstration kitchen, which is used for formal credit classes and personal enrichment workshops.

Two airports serve the City of Bentonville: Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport (XNA) and The Bentonville Municipal Airport. XNA provides commercial, non-stop air carrier service to 14 destinations nationwide and nearly 50 flights daily. Bentonville Municipal Airport offers charter service and full service maintenance.

## LOCATION ASSETS

WELL-PATRONIZED CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS  
SIGNIFICANT PER CAPITA AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
EDUCATED POPULATED  
AIRPORT ACCESS

# RESHORING RELATED TO THE WALMART INITIATIVE

## LIGHT ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SECTOR OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION

The Manufacturing sector comprises establishments engaged in the mechanical, physical, or chemical transformation of materials, substances, or components into new products. Advanced Manufacturing is described as an innovative process that takes synthesized or natural material through process and automation to produce a quality output. Additionally, companies are requiring their process to be sustainable and their waste to be reused. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) describes advanced manufacturing as the creation of integrated solutions that require the production of physical artifacts coupled with valued-added services and software, while exploiting custom-designed and recycled materials and using ultra-efficient processes.

Reshoring, the process of companies moving operations once exported out of the United States back to the United States, is not a fad. Companies are increasingly discovering that reshoring manufacturing back to the United States has drastically reduced supply chain costs and ultimately allowed companies to respond to consumer needs quicker.

The types of manufacturing moving back to the United States are broad in scope. Best suited for Bentonville is Light Advanced Manufacturing.

## SECTOR TRENDS

Many companies are making announcements regarding reshoring; however, none have been more vocal than Walmart, which has established a goal to purchase more than \$250 billion in U.S. made goods within ten years. Since Walmart's announcement, more than 1,500 have been reshored or created to support their commitment to the United States economy. Additionally, rising fuel costs and the risk of global crises have resulted in companies continuing to think heavily about their product being "Made in America."

PER CAPITA INCOME OF  
BENTONVILLE RESIDENTS  
IS HIGHER THAN AR  
AND U.S. AVERAGE





## LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Companies in the Light Manufacturing sector are typically seeking locations that provide proximity to markets (customers or suppliers), availability to raw materials, transportation access, available, affordable and trained workforce, utility infrastructure and available building and/or sites.

The City of Bentonville is the tenth largest city in the State of Arkansas and is located in the northwest region of the state. The estimated 2013 population of Bentonville is 39,188, which is projected to grow by 2.7 percent by 2018. The Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has a population more than 230,000 people with a 2.13 percent projected growth rate by 2018. In addition, within a 500-mile radius of Bentonville, companies can access Memphis, Dallas, Saint Louis and other major markets.

Major U.S. highways that service the City of Bentonville include I-49, Highway 71, and Highway 62. In addition, I-40 and I-44 are within 65 miles of the city. Major Arkansas Highways that run through Bentonville include State Highways 102, 12, and 72. Two airports serve the city: Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport (XNA) and The Bentonville Municipal Airport. Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport provides commercial, non-stop air carrier service to 14 destinations nationwide and nearly 50 flights daily with American Airlines, Delta, Northwest, Continental, U.S. Air, and United Airlines serving the airport.

The City of Bentonville has at least ten available industrial buildings ranging from 1,800 square feet to 550,000 square feet, as of June 2014. In addition, CrossMar Supplier Park, originally called Gateway Park, which is scheduled to open in October 2014, includes a 150,000 speculative industrial building and a total of 180 acres. CrossMar Supplier Park is located across the street from a Walmart distribution center and has 11 more sites available with room for buildings ranging from 70,000 to 500,000 square feet. The City of Bentonville also offers 193 undeveloped or vacant industrial land parcels as of June 2014. Amongst those sites, there is the Bentonville Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC) West Industrial Park, a 121-acre site located at SW Artillery Road and SW Minuteman Avenue.

## LOCATION ASSETS

- HOME TO WALMART
- CENTRAL U.S. LOCATION
- TRANSPORTATION ACCESS
- GROWING POPULATION
- AVAILABLE MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE IN REGION
- AVAILABLE INDUSTRIAL SITES AND BUILDINGS

## RETAIL SUPPLIER REGIONAL OFFICES

### SECTOR OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION

A regional headquarters is the entity at the top of a regional unit, including all activities of the various business units, that takes full responsibility for overall profitability and success of the regional unit. Regional headquarters often perform essential activities in-house that are parts of many sectors of the economy. In some cases a regional headquarters is the U.S. presence for foreign companies, but domestic companies also locate regional headquarters in geographic areas away from their corporate headquarters location.

Bentonville and Northwest Arkansas have a significant number of regional offices of major suppliers to Walmart. Currently approximately 1,400 Walmart suppliers have a presence in the Northwest Arkansas region, potentially employing up to 6,000 people. However, those offices generally focus only on sales and maintaining the suppliers' relationships with Walmart. These regional offices include major Fortune 500 and Fortune 1,000 companies such as Kraft, Nike, Mattel, Sony, IBM and Microsoft.

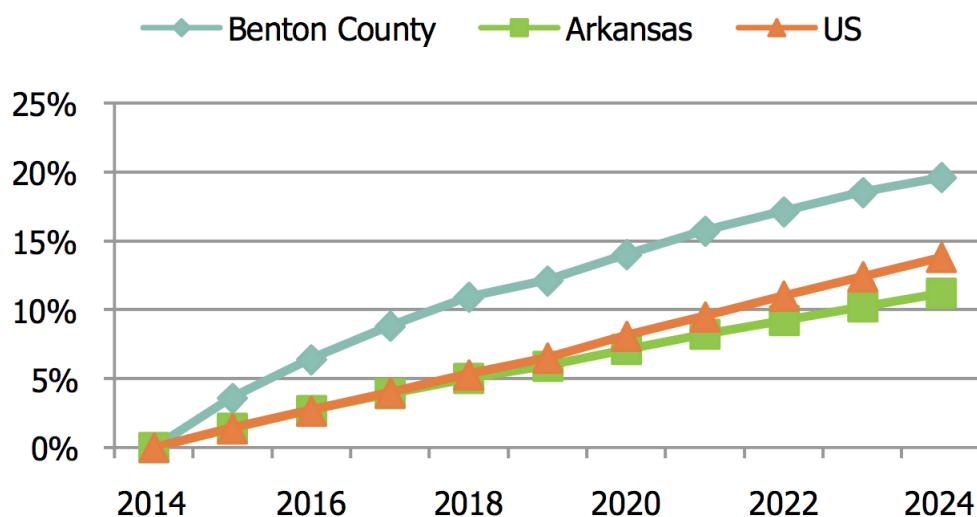
### SECTOR TRENDS

In recent years, there has been a migration of regional headquarters operations from northern cities to the south in order to contain costs. In addition, corporations are focusing on workforce productivity and attracting creative talent. Some companies are also considering splitting their headquarters locations and moving secondary functions to lower-cost locations, which also allows them to diversify their ability to attract and retain talent.

Benton County is already home to the headquarters of Walmart and J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc., in addition to the regional offices of Walmart vendors. The county is projected to see 9 percent growth in corporate headquarters jobs over the next five years, compared to 5 percent growth in the U.S. and 6 percent in Arkansas.

Much of this growth may be attributed to additional Walmart suppliers opening offices in the area, in addition to those with existing locations expanding their operations. Since 1994, the number of suppliers with offices in Northwest Arkansas has grown from 50 to almost 1,400. Walmart's anticipated continued growth may also contribute to increased presence of its suppliers. The company expects to add 270 to 300 small stores and increase its total retail square footage by 21 to 23 million square feet during the current fiscal year.

## Management Occupation Growth



**\$128,809  
AVERAGE  
WAGES  
FOR HQ JOBS**

## LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to proximity to a key customer such as Walmart, major factors considered by companies seeking a location for a regional headquarters or office include the availability of an educated and trained workforce with a variety of business, financial and technology skills. In addition, they consider the overall cost of doing business, including labor costs, and availability of Class A office space with flexible lease options. Access to good air service is also important to allow corporate employees to travel to additional company sites. In addition, strong telecommunications infrastructure and a supportive business environment are important location factors. These companies also desire a location with a low cost of living and overall strong quality of life.

The corporate headquarters for Walmart, the world's largest retailer, is located in Bentonville. Bentonville also offers a highly skilled workforce, with nearly 44 percent of adults having an Associate's degree or higher, and with 37 percent holding a Bachelor's or Graduate degree. The Shewmaker Center for Global Business Development at Northwest Arkansas Community College is home to the Retail Management Institute, which offers an Associate's degree in Business Management with a specialization in Retail Management. The University of Arkansas' flagship campus, located less than 30 miles from Bentonville is home to the Walton College of Business, and has more than 4,000 students seeking

Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees in Accounting, Economic, Finance, Information Systems, Management, Marketing, and Supply Chain Management.

In addition, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport provides commercial, non-stop air carrier service to 14 destinations nationwide and nearly 50 flights daily. The City of Bentonville offers an array of cultural and recreational opportunities, including the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, an extensive walking and biking trail system, a strong public school system, and comprehensive healthcare services.

## LOCATION ASSETS

HOME TO WALMART

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

REGIONAL AIRPORT WITH NON-STOP SERVICE TO 14 DESTINATIONS

CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



## RETAIL TECHNOLOGIES

### SECTOR OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION

As the line between in-store retail and e-commerce continues to blur, the demands for technologies that allow consumers to research, browse, and transact on the go are in increasing demand. Additionally, technologies that predict demand, manage and move inventory, and integrate physical, virtual and mobile selling channels are increasingly important.

Companies in the retail technologies sector research and develop new methods for supporting retailers, in addition to manufacturing products to deliver the new technologies, including bar code scanners, point-of-sale systems, retail payment and display systems, and supply chain management tools. Fully integrated information systems are utilized to link sales, inventory, purchasing and back office functions for major retailers, while other electronic systems link individual stores to corporate systems.

Data analytics companies, which are also part of the retail technologies sector, typically specialize in analyzing "big data" to help retailers improve their online

merchandising, marketing and/or prevent fraud. Using "big data," companies can analyze their customer behavior and preferences by gathering feedbacks from customers in Realtime through social media monitoring. International Data Corporation predicts that the market for big data will reach \$16.1 billion in 2014, growing six times faster than the overall IT market.

Walmart has purchased several data analytics companies, including Inkiru, Inc. in 2013, which uses "predictive analytics" technology that is designed to pull data from multiple sources to help retailers build merchandising and marketing campaigns targeting shoppers when they are most likely to buy.

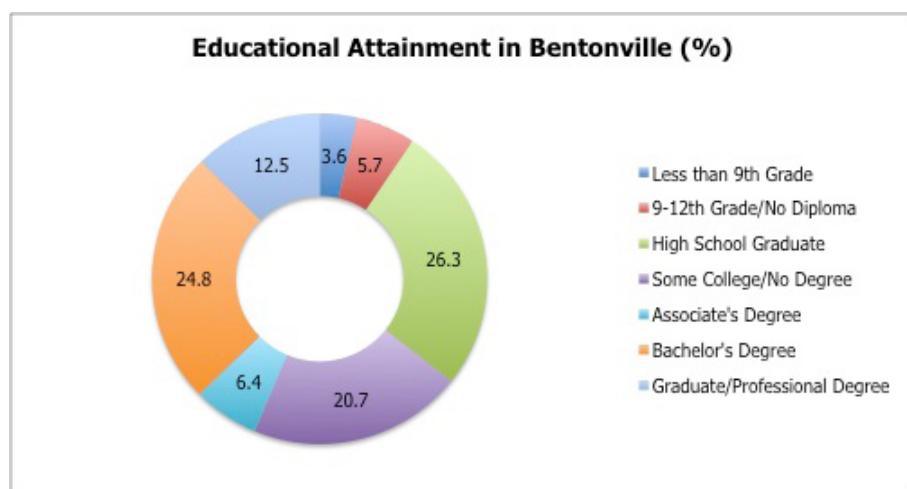
### SECTOR TRENDS

The retail sector offers consumers a variety of shopping options, both in terms of products available, as well as options for shopping, which includes national and regional chains, franchises and independent retailers, in addition to online retailers. Retailers are exploring all of these concepts, including brick and mortar stores, mobile commerce, the customer experience and other ideas to connect with well-informed mobile consumers.

Retailers are continually exploring new technologies to allow them to reach consumers through multiple channels and touch points. This "omnichannel" approach will continue to expand as retailers allow customers to seamlessly shop online and in stores. This approach will also include use of mobile payments, with retailers adopting solutions such as PayPal, Google Wallet, Square Wallet and Dwolla.

To further lure consumers, retailers will begin efforts to personalize the customer experience, not just online, but in brick-and-mortar locations by using technologies such as Bluetooth Low Energy to send tailored notifications to shoppers' mobile devices while they are shopping. Retailers are also exploring ways to enhance their loyalty programs to better meet the needs of consumers through more customized rewards based on social information and shopping behavior.

Like many other sectors, retailers will make significant investments in analyzing and using Big Data solutions to predict shopper behavior and provide personalized experiences, in addition to implementing dynamic pricing, shopper specific discounts, and more. Retailers will also use Big Data to optimize operations, refine pricing, anticipate demand and ensure adequate inventory.





BENTONVILLE IS HOME  
TO WALMART,  
THE WORLD'S  
LARGEST RETAILER.

# 11,000 RETAIL SECTOR JOBS

## LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

The Retail Technologies sector includes both information technology companies and manufacturers, with these two subsectors having somewhat different location considerations. A primary location consideration for companies involved in technology development is overall costs of doing business including labor, utilities, office space, and availability of financial incentives at the state or local level.

These companies also consider the education level and skill sets of the available workforce; resources available for workforce training; proximity to customers and to supportive research and development activities; transportation resources including airport access and ease of travel from company headquarters and other key business units; and the availability of land or Class A office space with affordable rates and flexible lease options.

Additional location criteria includes adequate and reliable telecommunications and power infrastructure; limited risk of natural disasters; low costs of living; and overall favorable quality of life.

For manufacturers in this sector, location factors include an available workforce with advanced manufacturing skills; proximity to customers and suppliers; a transportation network to allow for movement of product; access to technology research and development; and overall cost of doing business.

The corporate headquarters for Walmart, the world's largest retailer, is located in Bentonville. In addition, virtually all major Walmart vendors have a regional office in the area.

The Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville offers Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral programs to more than 4,000 students. The Information Technology Research Institute within the Walton College of Business conducts wide-ranging research related to the use of information technology in

businesses. It is home to the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Research Center, which in cooperation with Auburn University, focuses on implementation of RFID technologies for retail, supply chain management, and manufacturing companies. Movista, a private company based in Bentonville, specializes in development of smart device management tools, including its MVretail, which allows companies to manage remote employees and locations.

Bentonville also has good transportation access and infrastructure with the presence of major U.S. highways serving the city including I-49, Highway 71, and Highway 62. In addition, I-40 and I-44 are within 65 miles of the city. Major Arkansas Highways that run through Bentonville include State Highways 102, 12, and 72. In addition, two airports serve the City of Bentonville: Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport (XNA) and The Bentonville Municipal Airport. Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport provides commercial, non-stop air carrier service to 14 destinations nationwide and nearly 50 flights daily with American Airlines, Delta, Northwest, Continental, U.S. Air, and United Airlines serving the airport.

## LOCATION ASSETS

PRESENCE OF WALMART

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE REGION

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH IN THE REGION

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE



## SPECIALTY RETAIL

### SECTOR OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION

Retail is the final step in the distribution of merchandise process. Retail stores are fixed point-of-sale locations designed to attract a high volume of walk-in traffic. Typically, retail stores have extensive displays and sell merchandise for personal or household consumption.

Specialty retailers include local boutiques and upscale national stores, which focus on private label products. Examples of specialty retailers include Anthropologie, Jack Spade, Kiehl's, Lululemon, Athletica, and West Elm.

### SECTOR FOCUS AREAS

- ANTIQUE STORES
- ART GALLERIES
- BOUTIQUES
- SPECIALTY SHOPS
- UPSCALE NATIONAL CHAINS

### SECTOR TRENDS

Consumers are spending less time per shopping trip and making fewer trips to indoor malls, according to the International Council of Shopping Centers. Open-air malls and developments designed for retail/business/residential centers, which accommodate pedestrians, are gaining popularity. Smaller format stores are expected to see more growth than big-box formats.

Retailers are responding to customer's concern about the environment by offering "green" products and utilizing sustainable business operations and procedures. Retail trade output, in the U.S., is projected to grow at an annual compound rate of five percent between 2014 and 2018.

### NAICS Codes

- NAICS 448: CLOTHING AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES STORES
- NAICS 453: MISCELLANEOUS STORE RETAILERS

## LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Specialty retail stores consider current population, projected population growth and income levels of residents in making a location decision.

Benton County's current population for 2014 is 245,642 and is projected to grow 8 percent between 2014 and 2019. Per capita income in Bentonville is \$28,882, which is higher than the state (\$21,880) and the U.S. (\$27,576). The average household disposable income for Bentonville residents in 2013 was \$60,293, which is higher than the state (\$45,141) and the U.S. (\$55,490).

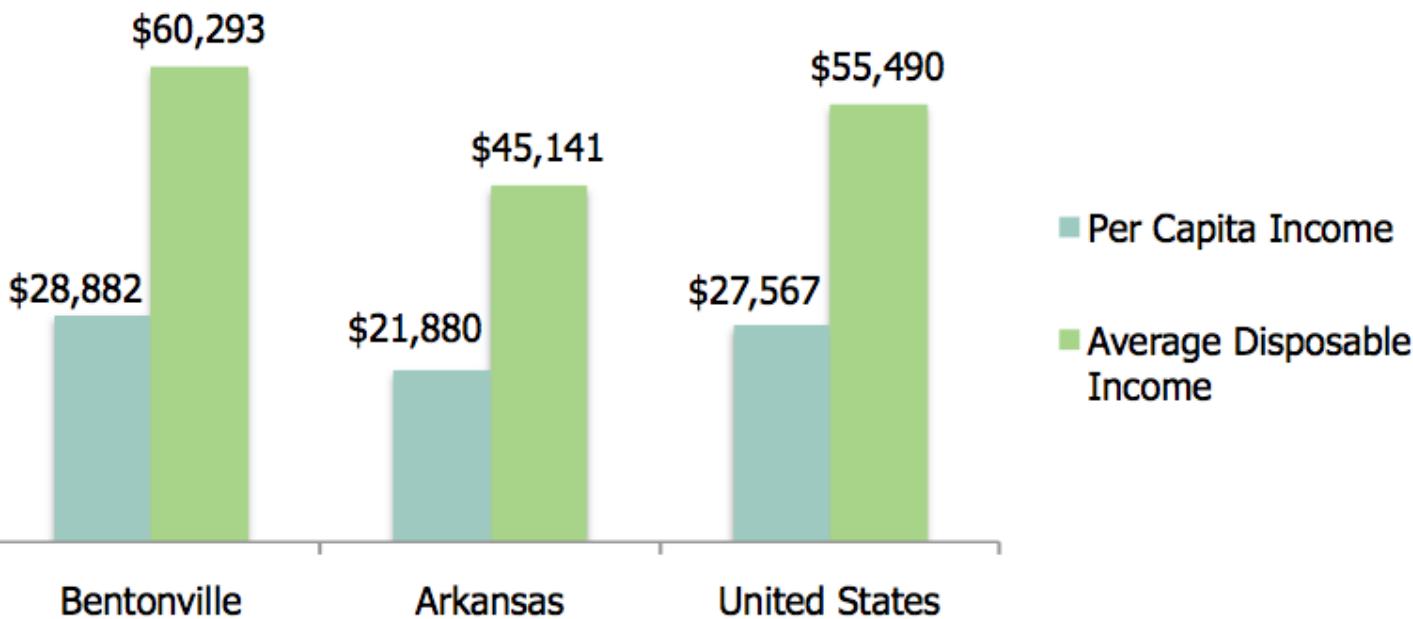
The City of Bentonville has 52 available retail spaces. The range of available space for these buildings is 3,930 square feet to 34,305 square feet. The City of Bentonville, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and the Midtown Shopping Center announced a new retail center which will include a new Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market, a traditional grocery store, and a pharmacy that will help serve the downtown Bentonville community. Also to be included is a three level parking garage that will provide parking to retail shoppers. The market is scheduled to open in the spring of 2015.

## LOCATION ASSETS

GROWING POPULATION

SIGNIFICANT PER CAPITA AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME  
AVAILABLE RETAIL SPACE

### 2013 Per Capita and Disposable Income



## TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING SERVICES

### SECTOR OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION

The Transportation and Warehousing sector includes industries providing warehousing and storage for goods and support activities related to modes of transportation, among other activities. Within that realm, distribution companies provide air, rail, truck, and waterborne transportation of goods; companies in the warehousing industry operate facilities to store goods; and logistics companies provide advice and assistance for supply chain management including planning, implementing and controlling the movement of inventory.

### SECTOR TRENDS

The Transportation and Warehousing sector is projected to grow at a rate of 7.5 percent in Benton County, which is greater than the state average. Growth in this sector is often closely tied to economic growth. Moreover, the increase of online purchases or E-commerce have generated growth in the Distribution/Warehousing/Logistics industry. Additionally, the International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses reported a 2 percent increase of storage capacity over 2013 which is trending higher year over year, and the global refrigerated and warehousing storage industry is expected to reach \$130 billion by 2017.

Companies are also finding increased efficiency by outsourcing warehousing and logistics functions to third party providers. With the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) and Radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags, logistics systems are offering faster more competitive services.

### SECTOR FOCUS AREAS

ECOMMERCE

REFRIGERATED WAREHOUSING AND STORAGE

THIRD-PARTY LOGISTICS PROVIDERS

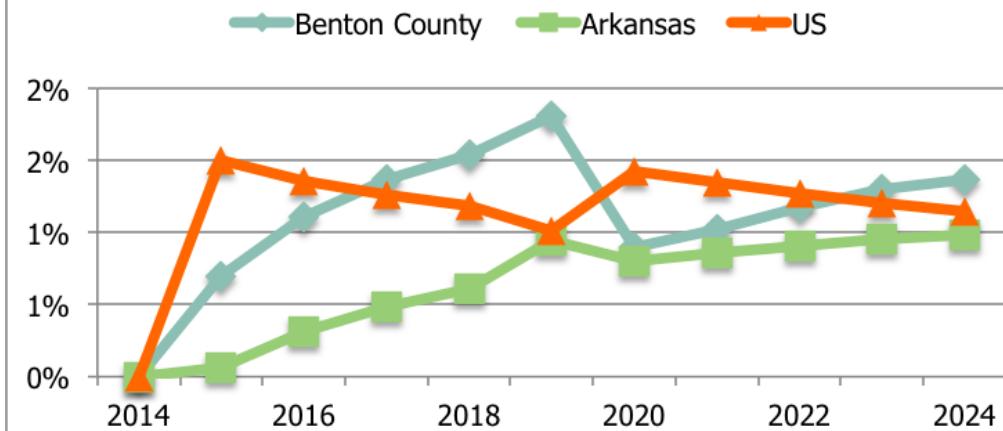
### NAICS Codes

NAICS 493: WAREHOUSING AND STORAGE

NAICS 484: TRUCK TRANSPORTATION

NAICS 488: SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR TRANSPORTATION

### Transportation and Warehousing Services Occupations





## LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Companies in the Transportation and Warehousing Services sector are typically seeking locations that have availability of multi-modal transportation infrastructure, available and affordable workforce and proximity to customers.

Bentonville is home to the Walmart Logistics Division, and the number one distribution center for the company employing more than 1,000 workers in the city, indicating it has the workforce in this sector. The regional workforce totals over 250,000 people and more than 6,000 people are employed in the Transportation and Warehousing Services sector.

Bentonville also has good transportation access and infrastructure with the presence of major U.S. highways serving the city including I-49, Highway 71, and Highway 62. In addition, I-40 and I-44 are within 65 miles of the city. Major Arkansas Highways that run through Bentonville include State Highways 102, 12, and 72. Within a 500-mile radius of Bentonville, companies can access Memphis, Dallas, Saint Louis and other major markets. In addition, two airports serve the City of Bentonville: Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport (XNA) and The Bentonville Municipal Airport. Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport provides commercial, non-stop air carrier service to 14 destinations nationwide and nearly 50 flights daily with American Airlines, Delta, Northwest, Continental, U.S. Air, and United Airlines serving the airport.

The City of Bentonville has at least ten available industrial buildings ranging from 1,800 square feet to 550,000 square feet, as of June 2014. In addition, CrossMar Supplier Park, originally called Gateway Park, which is scheduled to open in October 2014, includes a 150,000 speculative industrial building and a total of 180 acres. CrossMar Supplier Park is located across the street from a Walmart distribution center and has 11 more sites available with room for buildings ranging from 70,000 to 500,000 square feet.

The City of Bentonville also offers 193 undeveloped or vacant industrial land parcels as of June 2014. Amongst those sites, there is the Bentonville Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC) West Industrial Park, a 121-acre site located at SW Artillery Road and SW Minuteman Avenue.

## LOCATION ASSETS

HOME TO WALMART LOGISTICS DIVISION

GOOD LOCATION

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GROWING POPULATION

AVAILABLE WORKFORCE IN REGION

AVAILABLE SITES AND BUILDINGS

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The strategic priorities identified for Bentonville Blueprint are focused on leveraging all assets of the City of Bentonville and the region, while capitalizing on the most significant opportunities and addressing the challenges at the same time. In order for Bentonville to become its most exceptional and for progress to be made in all priorities, it must first be ensured that the economic development delivery system in Bentonville works and is sustainable long-term. Once this is assured, Bentonville can focus on the other strategic priorities, which all focus on the creation and retention of jobs in Bentonville through an even more defined focus on entrepreneurship; ensuring that existing business and industry are retained through a more structured business retention and expansion program; improving product development efforts; becoming even more exceptional in the development of an arts/cultural environment; and further enhancing sustainability efforts.

These priorities, along with the associated set of strategies and action items, provide Bentonville with an actionable guide to economic development over the next five years.

The implementation of each priority will impact the city's ability to be successful in the attraction and retention of the target opportunities identified, resulting in the creation and retention of jobs in Bentonville, and ensuring that Bentonville becomes the most exceptional city it can be.



## DELIVERY SYSTEM

All economic development efforts are organized differently. There are many possible structures – both formal and informal – that can work and for every example, one can find successful ones, as well as unsuccessful ones.

Regardless of the structure, what is important is the level of communication and collaboration between the various partners, as well as the need for each partner to be professionally strong in their own right. As with everything, the partnership chain can only be as strong as its weakest link. With this observation in mind, it is important to review the current status of Bentonville's economic development delivery system, provide some observations as to its strengths and weaknesses and then review possible alternative paths to improve the current system.

### CURRENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY SYSTEM CITY OF BENTONVILLE

The Bentonville Community and Economic Development Department works with the Mayor and other departments of city government on issues that affect the city's community and economic development efforts. The Planning Division of the department leads the city's planning efforts for city policy and programs designed to enhance economic development. The department serves as the point-of-contact for city owned industrial/commercial property and as liaison with other economic development partners. The Mayor hosts a weekly meeting to ensure partners are collaborating and communicating to the greatest extent possible.

Although the Bentonville/Bella Vista Chamber of Commerce is the designated entity for economic development, currently it seems that some business development leads are coming to the City of Bentonville instead of the Chamber.

#### DOWNTOWN BENTONVILLE, INC. (DBI)

DBI is an independent non-profit association with the charge of promoting and enhancing experiences in the downtown district of Bentonville. Although it focuses much of its efforts on events, it does play the role of match maker in linking businesses with downtown opportunities. DBI receives funding from the City of Bentonville and memberships.

#### BENTONVILLE\*BELLA VISTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (CHAMBER)

The Chamber is a membership organization that also receives funding from the City of Bentonville to serve as the primary point-of-contact for businesses and companies looking to locate and/or expand new operations in Bentonville. In addition, they receive funding from the Northwest Arkansas Council to provide business retention services within their jurisdiction as well.

#### THE BENTONVILLE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU (CVB)

The CVB works to bring visitors, meetings and sporting events to Bentonville. The Advertising and Promotion Commission (A&P) is made up of seven commissioners, two from the hotel industry, two from the restaurant industry, two city council members, and one at large position.

The A&P Commission is the governing body of the CVB. The CVB receives funding from revenue from the lodging and restaurant tax. As arts and culture has become a significant part of Bentonville's economic development future, the CVB's functions are more closely aligned with other economic development efforts than ever before.

#### NORTHWEST ARKANSAS COUNCIL

The Council is a private, non-profit organization that undertakes regional issues important to the continued viability and growth of the regional economy. The Council is the regional economic development organization lead. Those appropriate for Bentonville, are directed to the Chamber for follow-up and response. As mentioned above, the Council provides funding assistance to the Chamber to support its existing industry program.

## OBSERVATIONS

Regionalism is of paramount importance to economic development and Bentonville should continue all support and efforts tied to the Northwest Arkansas Council.

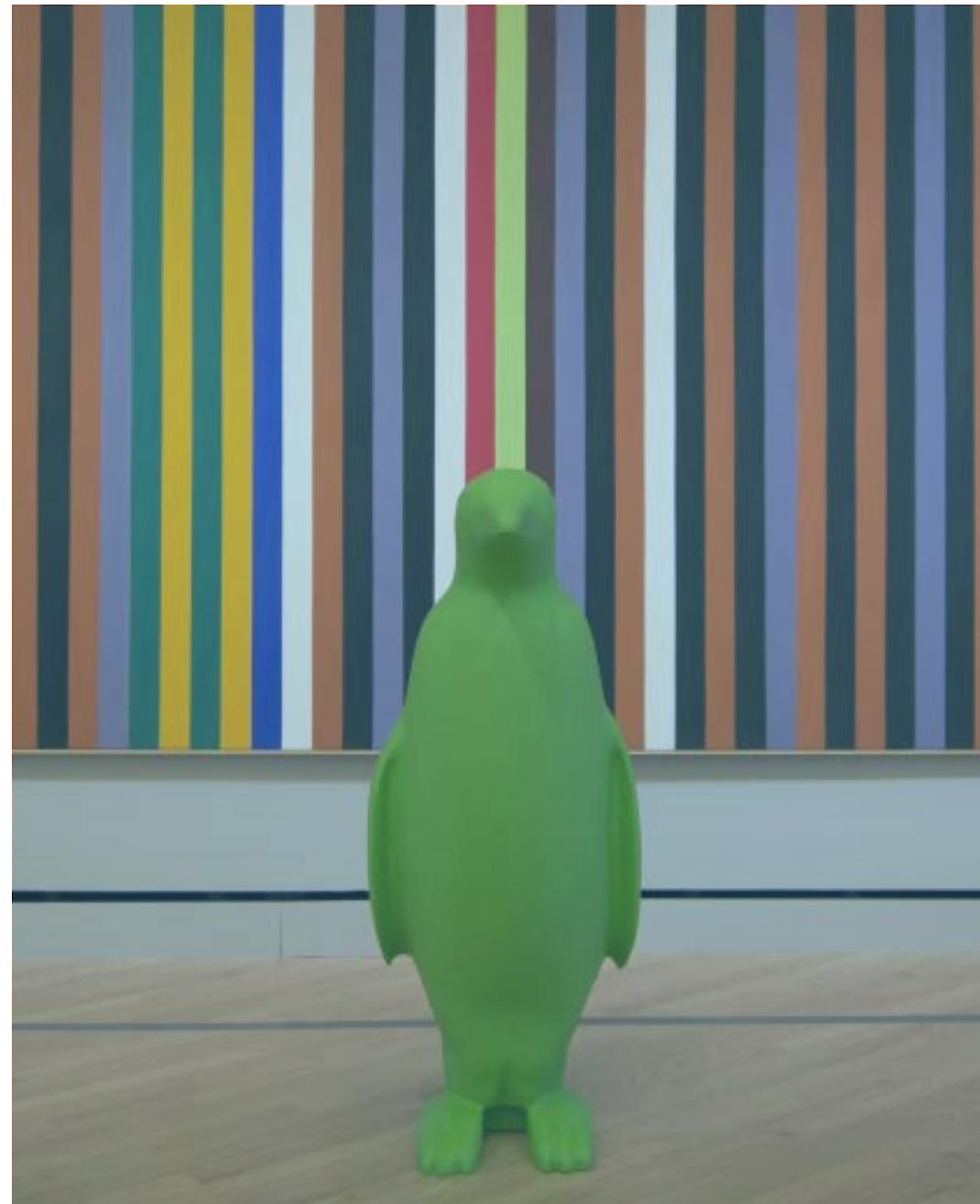
Bentonville, cannot however, rely on others to create their own economic development successes and should strive to ensure it has the best economic development delivery system and product possible to achieve its agreed upon goals.

Due to a lack of a Business License requirement in Bentonville, there is not a definitive inventory of businesses located within the city limits. Most cities in Arkansas including Rogers, Springdale, Fayetteville, Jonesboro and Little Rock, as well as most cities in the U.S. have some kind of Business License in place.

Although all the various functions critical to economic development success are in place, the business retention and recruitment functions are not being given the attention and priority required to be successful.

Business retention and recruitment requires performance metrics and accountability to succeed in today's competitive landscape. These metrics do not appear to be in place.

Economic development has evolved; entrepreneurship, arts and culture are all a much bigger component of economic development than in years past. Bentonville's new strategy should reflect this reality. These new program areas will require a close working relationship with DBI and the CVB, as well as clarification as to responsibility for entrepreneur support.



# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL COLORADO SPRINGS COLORADO

The Colorado Springs Regional Business Alliance (Alliance) is the primary advocate of the Colorado Springs/Pikes Peak region business community. The Alliance resulted from the merger of the Greater Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Colorado Springs Regional Economic Development Corporation. The Alliance Board of Directors consists of 25 members plus seven ex-officio members and three advisors.

The Board of Governors of the Alliance is comprised of companies, organizations, and individual investors that annually contribute \$10,000 or more to the organization. Benefits of being part of the Board of Governors includes the right to elect 17 of 25 members of the Board of Directors, among others.



## PRIORITY: DEVELOP AN EXCEPTIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY SYSTEM IN BENTONVILLE

### STRATEGY: CREATE A NEW, PUBLIC/PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION FOR BENTONVILLE

#### NAME

This organization could be called the BENTONVILLE BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP or BENTONVILLE BUSINESS ALLIANCE.

#### STRUCTURE

- DBI and the Chamber (membership services, policy and advocacy role, etc.) functions would fall under the new organization.
- CVB would remain separate.

#### BOARD

- There needs to be a strong board with a few positions appointed by the Mayor with the others coming from the private sector.
- At least one representative of the CVB should be on the Board.

#### FUNDING

- The organization should be funded by at least \$130,000 from the City (\$100,000 currently goes to the Chamber and \$30,000 currently goes to DBI).
- Additional funding should come from a new Business License Fee to be implemented, as well as private funding.

#### PROPOSED STAFFING

- Executive Director or CEO
- Director of Business Recruitment and Expansion
- Director of Entrepreneurship
- Director of Downtown Development
- Director of Chamber Activities (or Policy and Advocacy)
- Director of Sustainability (part-time)
- City Liaison

## ART AND CULTURE

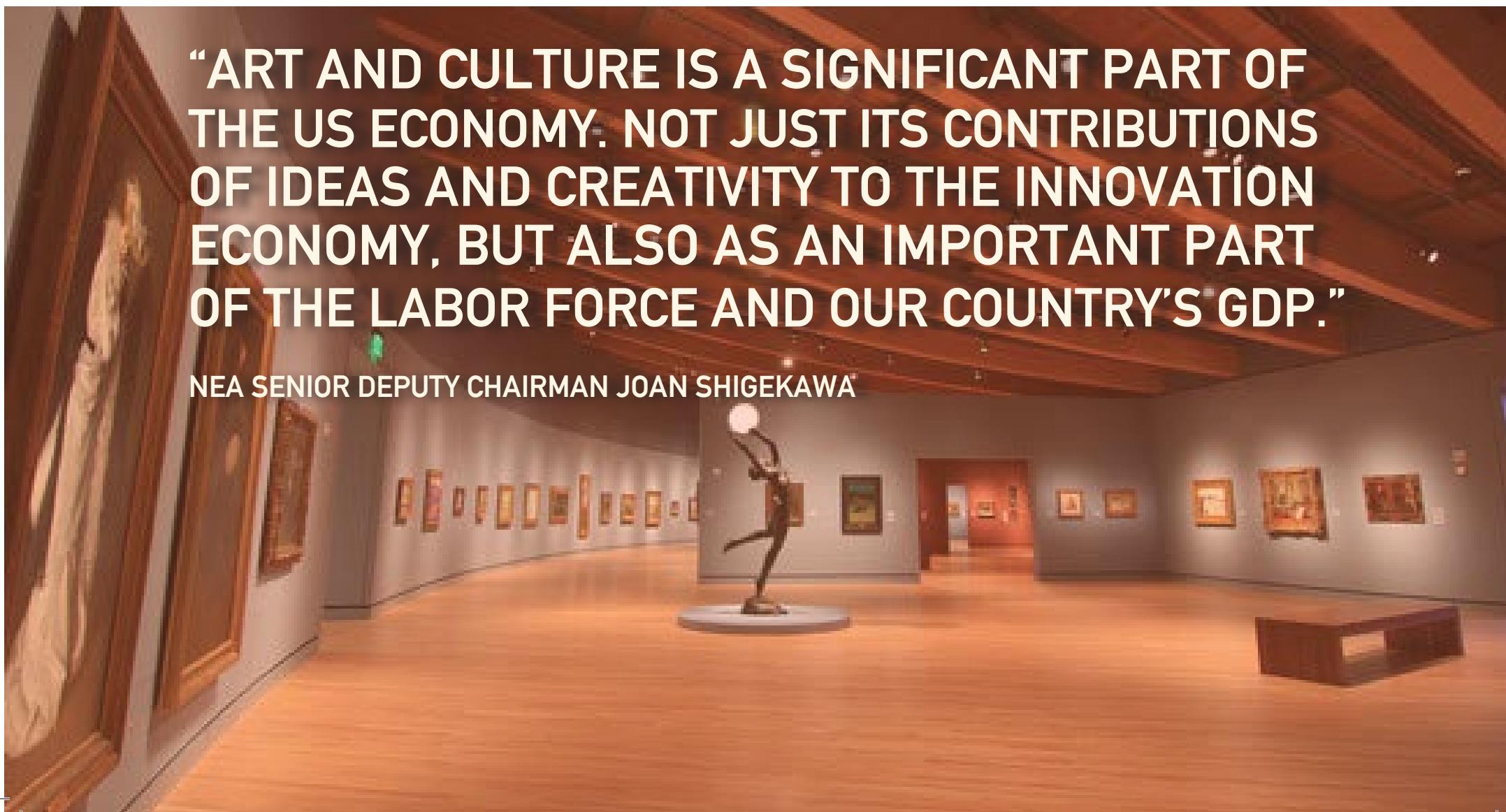
### OVERVIEW

As subjective as art and culture is throughout the world, there is little doubt about the exceptional quality of Bentonville's footprint on the collective art community. Ranging from amateur art shows, school projects and festivals to the colossal fortitude that range throughout the art community in the development of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville now has a unrivaled foothold in the development of art and culture.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

**"ART AND CULTURE IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE US ECONOMY. NOT JUST ITS CONTRIBUTIONS OF IDEAS AND CREATIVITY TO THE INNOVATION ECONOMY, BUT ALSO AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LABOR FORCE AND OUR COUNTRY'S GDP."**

NEA SENIOR DEPUTY CHAIRMAN JOAN SHIGEKAWA



In December 2013, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released a study that shows arts and cultural production accounts for \$504 billion of the gross domestic product (GDP). Top contributors of arts and cultural GDP include motion picture and video industries, advertising (creative content only), cable television production and distribution, TV and radio broadcasting, newspaper and periodical publishing and performing arts and independent artists.

Not only reshaping the development of the community as a whole, but also shaping the minds and trajectory of the creative capacity of the community, Bentonville has the opportunity to further expand and develop its arts and cultural offerings.

## PRIORITY: CONTINUE TO BE EXCEPTIONAL IN AND FURTHER DEVELOP THE ARTS/CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN BENTONVILLE.

### STRATEGIES

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE ARTS AND MARKET DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA

CREATE AN ARTIST RELOCATION PROGRAM

FORM A BENTONVILLE ARTS ALLIANCE

CONSIDER A PARTNERSHIP WITH ARTSPACE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE ARTIST LOFT SPACE

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE LOCATION OF A PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TO BENTONVILLE

CREATE A DOWNTOWN BENTONVILLE ARTS, CULINARY AND MUSIC FESTIVAL MODELED ON THE SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FESTIVAL IN AUSTIN

PROVIDE ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION

SUPPORT PRESENCE AND FUTURE EXPANSION OF FOOD TRUCKS AS PART OF THE CULINARY ENVIRONMENT

CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL FILM PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT

### STRATEGY: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE ARTS AND MARKET DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT.

In December 2013, Bentonville city officials unveiled a large redevelopment plan that encompasses the southeastern quadrant of the 18-acre downtown area. The plan calls for three distinct districts all within walking distance of each other and the downtown square.

The Arts District would include Bentonville Library on Main Street and another four to five blocks of redevelopment focused on the arts that would include a public plaza, studio space, inexpensive living space for working artists, small cafes and a public arts center. The Market District would include several blocks around the vacant Tyson Foods facility on 8th Street and the empty Kraft cheese plant on S.E. E Street. The Market District plan focuses on the culinary arts with hopes of generating new commercial development such as restaurants, an expanded Farmer's Market, and new living space. The Razorback Greenway would run through the district. There would also be redevelopment of the two major streets that connect the two districts, Main Street and Southwest A Street, including new single-family homes, shops and other space for mixed-use development.

#### ACTION ITEM:

The City of Bentonville should continue the focus on the development of these districts but should consider marketing the districts as the Arts and Market District since they are located so close together. Separating the two districts results in a loss of synergies that naturally exist between foodies and the arts, as recognized in the term "culinary arts." By making it one district, with all the same planning principles already in place, it would give more flexibility "to the market" and let the artists and entrepreneurs decide where to go. It would allow for this part of town to develop more organically, as it is hard to predict where the successful efforts will take place, but once one does, others will follow.

#### ACTION ITEM:

The city may also want to consider naming the Arts and Market District a more distinctive brand such as: "SoDo" (South Downtown) – "SoBe" (South Bentonville) – "SouthBen" (South Bentonville).

#### ACTION ITEM:

An interactive mobile map of the newly formed area should be created that promotes an effective way finding for galleries, restaurants, shops, cultural

## STRATEGY: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-DENSITY IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

Downtown Bentonville should be a residential hot spot given the cuisine and arts that draw thousands to the downtown square each week. The demand for living downtown is growing, especially among younger people. Residential development is already happening in downtown Bentonville with Thrive, a mixed-use 44,000 square foot apartment complex with 62 residential units that will be just a few blocks from Bentonville's downtown square in the Arts District, and two new residential developments that were approved in May, including the Black Apple Addition located near Crystal Bridges Museum and five blocks from the square, and the Lamplighter Townhome development, a large-scale residential project located approximately four blocks from the square.

The development of this high-density housing in the downtown area is critical to support the city's future development making it more of a live/work/play environment, and encouraging the location of more young people and families to the city's core.

## STRATEGY: CREATE AN ARTIST RELOCATION PROGRAM

The plans for the Arts District already include developing studio space and inexpensive living space for the working artist.

The City should consider developing an Artist Relocation Program focused on identifying artists to recruit that have achieved some success in the art world and those that can show that their business produces sufficient sales and clients to support the artist while living and working in Bentonville. These artists would have priority in utilization of the studio space and living space developed for the working artist.

## STRATEGY: FORM A BENTONVILLE ARTS ALLIANCE

The City of Bentonville should consider taking the lead, working with the Bentonville Convention & Visitors Bureau, to create a Bentonville Arts Alliance group, which would be partially funded by the City and CVB but mainly funded through membership. The Bentonville Arts Alliance would work with the City and CVB to implement the recommendations in this section.

### ACTION ITEM

Determine structure and establish the Bentonville Arts Alliance.

### ACTION ITEM

Hire a Director of the Arts Alliance.



# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL PADUCAH, KY ARTIST RELOCATION PROGRAM

In 2000, the Paducah Arts Alliance created the Artist Relocation Program to recruit artists to the community for collaboration, education and cultural recreation. The program has become a national model for using the arts for economic development. Paducah fosters an environment where artists and the arts can flourish by seeking artists who have achieved some notoriety in the art world, and who are using a successful art business model.

Selected artists receive:  
Zoned for live/work spaces, which enables residents to have gallery/studio, restaurant/café, living, and other mixed uses. Properties available for as little as \$1 to qualifying proposals. Marketing and promotional materials for the Arts District

<http://www.paducahalliance.org/artist-relocation-program/artist-incentives>

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL DECATUR, GA

## DECATUR ARTS ALLIANCE

The Decatur Arts Alliance (DAA) is a non-profit partnership of artists, business owners, residents and government dedicated to supporting and enhancing the arts in the City of Decatur.

It is a membership organization, which is partially funded by the City of Decatur. The DAA sponsors several annual festivals including the Decatur Arts Festival, and the Decatur Wine Festival, as well as special events for members only. It also provides a collaborative environment to coordinate the interests of artists, gallery owners, theater groups, dance groups and performance venues within Decatur and to help build the image of the city as a strong arts community. The DAA operates the city's Cultural Space Brokerage, a database of vacant spaces that can be utilized by arts and arts organizations at reduced rates.

<http://decaturartsalliance.org/blog/events/2014-decatur-arts-alliance-events/>

## STRATEGY: CONSIDER A PARTNERSHIP WITH ARTSPACE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE ARTISTS LOFT SPACE

Artspace was established in 1979 to establish affordable space for artists and art organizations. Since then, Artspace has expanded its activities to include projects in operation or development in more than 20 states across the country, assisting in the development of nearly 2,000 live/work units and millions of square feet of non-residential community and commercial space.

The City of El Paso, working in partnership with the El Paso Community Foundation, is currently working with Artspace to transform an area in downtown El Paso into an arts destination animated by artists and creative businesses. The project will provide space for vibrant local artists to complement the community's El Paso's children's museum, art museum, history museum, science museum and theater.

The Artspace El Paso Lofts will blend 51 affordable live/ work units for artists and their families with 5,000 square feet of multi-purpose nonprofit commercial space with a large community room on the ground floor providing space for artists and community groups for meetings, events, exhibitions and performances.



In 2006, as part of its plan to revitalize downtown Council Bluffs, the Iowa West Foundation requested that Artspace explore the feasibility of transforming a former International Harvester Warehouse built in 1888 into an affordable live/work project for artists. The Harvester is a four-story building with approximately 47,000 square feet in the main structure and an additional 24,000 square feet in a spacious one-story addition built in 1928.

This building was transformed in 2010 at a cost of \$11.2 million into Harvester Artspace Lofts, a 36-unit project that provides 5,320 square feet of space for arts-friendly commercial use, including a coffee shop and meeting space, as well as an award-winning florist. Among its residents are a number of artists who have moved from Omaha to take advantage of the Harvester's affordable rents. As a result of this development, downtown Council Bluffs has seen the addition of several creative businesses and restaurants in recent years.

### ACTION ITEM

Bentonville should consider launching a survey of artists located in the region to gauge the interest for this type of live/work unit in Bentonville.

### ACTION ITEM

A possible site or existing building to renovate should also be considered.

### ACTION ITEM

The City should then contact Artspace to determine the feasibility and potential cost of a development like this near downtown Bentonville.

## STRATEGY: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE LOCATION OF A PERFORMING ARTS CENTER TO BENTONVILLE

The Walton Arts Center, which opened in 1992 on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, brings great performing artists and entertainers from around the world to Northwest Arkansas. The Walton Arts Center is currently at the beginning of a \$20 million expansion of the Fayetteville campus.

In 2012, a study confirmed that the Center board was considering a 2,000-seat new performance center in downtown Bentonville. The city should continue to support the planning and development of the Walton Arts Center's location in Bentonville. As well as a catalyst for further development of the arts and cultural environment in Bentonville, the Center would create incredible synergies for emerging artist and actors collaborating alongside accomplished performers.



## STRATEGY: CREATE A DOWNTOWN BENTONVILLE ARTS, CULINARY, AND MUSIC FESTIVAL MODELED ON SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST IN AUSTIN

Festivals and special events can be expensive to host, considering their many needs, such as police force, first aid, facility maintenance, and parking, among others. However, the positive impacts of such events can and should significantly outweigh the costs.

Create a downtown Bentonville Arts, Culinary, and Music Festival that is seamlessly focused on entrepreneurship, food, music, art, culture, and sustainability. A digital media component should also eventually be included as a separate component. The festival should be modeled on South by Southwest in Austin but would obviously need to be a miniature version of that festival.

### ACTION ITEM

Establish an exploratory committee.

### ACTION ITEM

Consider contacting SXSW, Inc. about assisting with the development of the festival.

### ACTION ITEM

Explore possible dates that do not conflict with already established major regional events and choose a location near the square.

### ACTION ITEM

Determine overall theme, which may focus on arts, culinary, music, and eventually digital media.

### ACTION ITEM

Determine the name of festival, which could be called North by Northwest (NXNW).

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL AUSTIN, TX SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST (SXSW)

SXSW is a set of film, interactive, and music festivals and conferences that take place each year in mid-March in Austin. SXSW began in 1987, and has continued to grow in both scope and size every year. The festival showcases about 2,000 musical acts and screens more than 250 films. It hosts about 12,000 music registrants and 17,000 film and interactive registrants.

SXSW is run by the company SXSW, Inc., which plans and executes conferences, trade shows, festivals, and other events. In addition to the three main SXSW festivals, the company runs three other conferences, two in Austin: SXSWedu, a conference on educational innovation, and SXSW Eco, an environmental conference; and one in Las Vegas: SXSW V2V, a conference focused on innovative startups.



## STRATEGY: PROVIDE ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION

Create programs focused on providing arts education in Bentonville.

### Arts Education in the Public Schools

#### ACTION ITEM

The newly established Bentonville Arts Alliance should join the National Guild for Community Arts Education, which supports and advances lifelong learning opportunities in the arts.

#### ACTION ITEM

Ensure that Bentonville is providing arts education in all public schools.

#### ACTION ITEM

Explore the development of new arts education programs in the public schools through the National Guild for Community Arts Education.

#### ACTION ITEM

The Director of the Bentonville Arts Alliance and identified teachers in the public schools should attend Annual Conference for the Community Arts Education, which provides essential professional development and networking opportunities.

### Community School of the Arts

#### ACTION ITEM

Explore the creation of a Community School of the Arts in Bentonville.

## STRATEGY: SUPPORT PRESENCE AND FUTURE EXPANSION OF FOOD TRUCKS AS PART OF THE CULINARY ENVIRONMENT

Food trucks, or mobile venues that sell food, are a staple in America's culinary landscape and have become increasingly trendy in recent years. Nearly three million food trucks are operating in the U.S. today. Mobile food vending generates approximately \$650 million in revenue annually. The industry is projected to account for approximately \$2.7 billion in food revenue over the next five years.

Bentonville already has a number of food trucks that operate in the area on a daily basis. These food trucks, which represent part of the culinary environment, should continue to be supported and the recruitment of additional food trucks should be pursued. At the same time, the following should occur:

#### ACTION ITEM

Ensure the mobile vending policy and regulatory guidelines related to food trucks are publicized and enforced.

#### ACTION ITEM

Develop a centralized permitting process (where all required permits can be obtained in the same location at the same time), including reasonable cost for permitting. Austin and Cincinnati's streamlined permitting processes can be used as models of a more centralized mobile vending permitting process.



# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL KNOXVILLE, TN COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

The Community School of the Arts, founded in Knoxville in 1992, was the first non-profit of its kind in the State of Tennessee to provide free instruction in the arts to children who would otherwise not have access to such education.

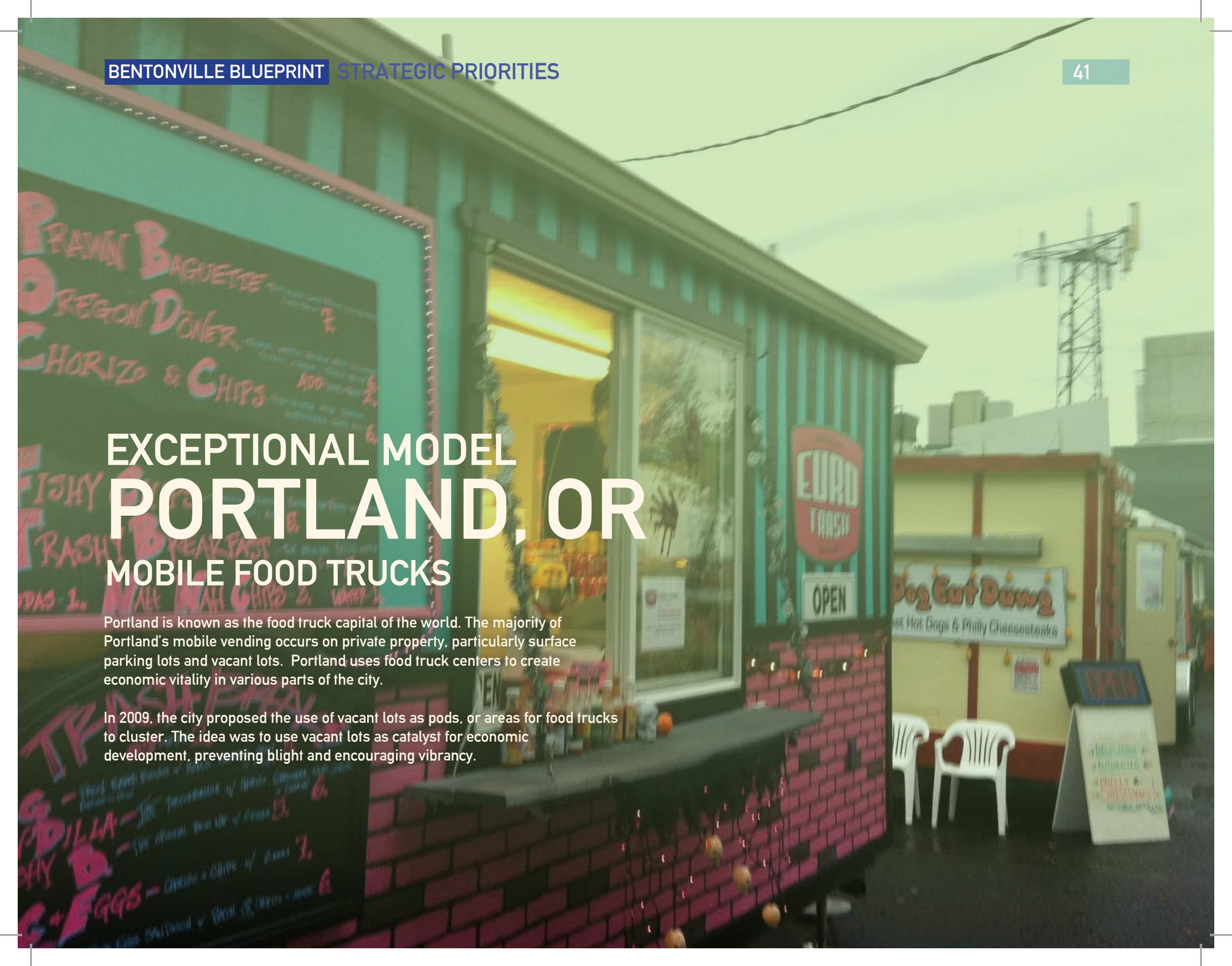
The instructors at the school are professional artists, dancers, musicians and the educators. The school was named one of the top arts and humanities based programs in the country by the National Endowment for the Arts and President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, and one of 35 finalists for 2010 and 2013 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards. The Community School of the Arts is a fully accredited member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education.

<http://csaknox.org>

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL PORTLAND, OR MOBILE FOOD TRUCKS

Portland is known as the food truck capital of the world. The majority of Portland's mobile vending occurs on private property, particularly surface parking lots and vacant lots. Portland uses food truck centers to create economic vitality in various parts of the city.

In 2009, the city proposed the use of vacant lots as pods, or areas for food trucks to cluster. The idea was to use vacant lots as catalyst for economic development, preventing blight and encouraging vibrancy.



## STRATEGY: SUPPORT GROWTH OF FILM PRODUCTION IN BENTONVILLE

Film Production is often a productive element of many state, regional and local economic development strategies. The pursuit of high-profile productions is extremely competitive and is largely determined by the level of state-based economic incentives to help attract and support production projects.

Arkansas is an industry innovator through the first state-based production rebate program. Initially the refund was 5 percent for all qualified expenditures, but has since grown to 15 percent of local expenditures of each qualified project. Since Arkansas does have a competitive incentive program for film production, Bentonville should consider how to leverage the state program for its own benefit.

Although incentives are important, movie scripts often require a particular "look" for location-based shooting. Bentonville's authentic "small town, wholesome, mid-America" ambience is often the environment where many films are shot. The same atmosphere and assets that make Bentonville a magnet for visitors, diners and new downtown residents are what often attracts location scouts, producers and directors. These local assets combined with the ability to leverage state incentive programs are the basis for BSA's inclusion of a Film Production strategy in this Blueprint. The direct and ancillary benefits of film production further support the rationale for inclusion of this "clean" industry. Not only are there direct economic benefits to the vendors supporting the cast and crew, films generate exposure, publicity and notoriety for communities that often result in future demand for the community as a location for visits, meetings and relocations.

Although the State has a film recruitment program, the filming itself is "local" and communities that can demonstrate the ability to welcome, support and facilitate local film production have a competitive advantage over those than cannot.

### STRUCTURE

#### ACTION ITEM

Create the Bentonville Film Commission as a working committee that would draw its members from the new economic development organization, Convention & Visitors Bureau and the City of Bentonville.

#### ACTION ITEM

Designate professional in one of the participating organizations as responsible for implementing the program and to work with the Bentonville Film Commission.

#### ACTION ITEM

Develop template of process to recruit individuals for extras and non-speaking roles.

### COLLABORATION WITH STATE FILM OFFICE

#### ACTION ITEM

Take full advantage of the State Film Office and develop an understanding of its programs and services. The initial objective of the Film Program should be to take full advantage of everything the State Film Office has to offer. The more the local program does to support and bolster the state's efforts, the more likely Bentonville will begin to generate the interest of location scouts, producers and directors.

#### ACTION ITEM

Take photos of as many different aspects of the community as possible and provide to the State Film Office for its on-line, searchable database. Consult with the State Film Office to help prioritize which images are in greatest demand.

#### ACTION ITEM

Recruit local businesses to participate in the State's Preferred Vendor program. These vendors must be members of an "Alliance Partner", i.e. Chamber of Commerce, and agree to offer discounts to qualified production projects of 15 percent or more.

#### ACTION ITEM

Participate, when appropriate, in State Film Office marketing opportunities.

### DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL/REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT

#### ACTION ITEM

Clarify with the City of Bentonville, the need for filming permits (most Arkansas cities do not require) and level of support film production crews can expect with street closures, crowd control and others issues that may arise during filming.

#### ACTION ITEM

Inventory local film talent and resources. Although film production companies are capable of bringing with them all their technical needs, being able to provide some level of local talent will result in a more competitive position.

**ACTION ITEM**

Create relationship with John Brown University to identify the expertise of the students and alumni of its Digital Cinema Major.

**ACTION ITEM**

Survey local digital media companies to determine which have the interest and capability to support local film production projects.

**ACTION ITEM**

Determine focus of local interest with regards to the film program. Although every state and community desires to be the location for the next big-budget, Hollywood blockbuster, these projects are few and far between. Many successful film locations rely on the production of independent films, high-end commercials, episodic television programs and reality television to maintain their involvement with the industry as they position themselves for the "big project." The State Film Incentive recognizes the importance of commercials through offering its rebate incentive to qualifying commercial shoots with a local minimum budget of \$250,000 or more.

**ACTION ITEM**

Identify the level of in-house and/or local film production undertaken by WalMart and its suppliers to determine which aspects of film production would be most compatible and synergistic with existing work.

**ACTION ITEM**

Interview regional advertising agencies to determine where and how they produce commercials for their major clients to help assess viability of this aspect of filming as a proactive focus.

**ACTION ITEM**

Identify any local connections to production companies and/or individuals with a history of investing in film production in order to focus energies on types of work supported by these individuals.

**ACTION ITEM**

Increase awareness of Bentonville's interest in film production. The Film Committee and its supporting professional should educate the community, especially those in a position to serve as advocates, on the city's interest and support for film production.

**ACTION ITEM**

Educate community leadership on the value of film production.

**ACTION ITEM**

Ensure management at Crystal Bridges is aware of this priority as they host VIP visitors.

**ACTION ITEM**

Consider creating some type of "Film Festival" to unify the local film community and bring attention to Downtown Bentonville in the film context.

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

### OVERVIEW

Every economic development program and strategy must include an element that addresses identifying and meeting the needs of existing business and industry. Not only does it provide balance, diversity and fairness to a program, it helps to prevent the “leakage” of existing companies moving outside the jurisdiction because their needs were not met. It is not an effective or efficient allocation of economic development resources to spend significant time, effort and money on attracting new companies, while allowing a significant number of existing companies to depart. Programs that ignore this basic tenant of economic development risk experiencing more job losses than they can gain through their recruitment initiatives.

It will not be impossible, nor is it desirable, for the BRE program to touch every company within the City. Priorities driven by other elements of this strategy will have to be made to clarify the types of companies to be targeted and the types of challenges and opportunities to focus. It is equally important to note that, in the absence of such a program, Bentonville will continue to lose some its companies that are similar to companies that it will be actively recruiting.



## PRIORITY: DEVELOP AN EXCEPTIONAL BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROGRAM IN BENTONVILLE

### STRATEGIES

CONDUCT AN INVENTORY OF EXISTING COMPANIES

DETERMINE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

DETERMINE PROJECT COMPONENTS

A Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) program for Bentonville should include the following components:

#### STRATEGY: CONDUCT AN INVENTORY OF EXISTING COMPANIES

It is important to know what companies are operating within Bentonville. The program need only inventory the categories of companies that are deemed important to success. For example, Bentonville, should work to develop an inventory of companies in its target sector opportunities and in other areas including: digital media; hospitality, culture and entertainment; light advanced manufacturing; retail supplier regional offices; retail technologies; specialty retail; transportation and warehousing; Walmart vendors; startup companies and others. In cities that have a business license, it is easier to obtain the initial list of all companies with an operation in the jurisdiction and prioritize the list based on program criteria. In Bentonville, however, the lack of a business license requirement will present some challenges, but not render the objective impossible.

#### STRATEGY: DETERMINE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Beyond determining the general health of the business, whether it is growing, facing survival challenges, or operating satisfactorily somewhere in between, program objectives will depend on the company's business and needs. There are several different categories that are worth discussing.

- Manufacturers** – Manufacturers face many issues common to one another. As they are identified, they should be visited to determine any of the following: hiring issues, training issues, supplier issues, utility issues, and other. An assessment should be made as to whether the operation is "at risk" or feeling the pressure to expand. If "at risk", all efforts should be made to determine if any assistance or intervention will be helpful and, if so, provide the targeted assistance. If there is nothing that can be done, then efforts should shift to providing assistance



to employees in identifying new job opportunities with other manufacturers. If the manufacturer has the potential to expand, this company should be treated like a new prospect looking to locate and receive all available assistance from the city, region and state with respect to economic development incentives and identification of real estate alternatives.

- Startups and Gazelles** – A gazelle company is generally considered to be a high growth company with 20 percent or more annual increases in revenue for four years or more. Successful startup companies with less than four years of financial records, often share many of the same attributes. It is important to identify these companies within the city in order to not only nurture them, but ensure that Bentonville fully participates in their future success. Pressure to relocate comes to these companies from many directions – investors want them closer, the need to be closer to a major customer, challenges with recruiting or retaining talent, or, a simple lack of desirable real estate options. Depending on the situation, there is a great deal a BRE program can do to ensure that the greatest number possible of these high-growth companies remain in Bentonville and continue to prosper there to the mutual benefit of the City and the company.

- Walmart Vendors** – Most likely the largest single category of Bentonville's existing industry is Walmart Vendors. This BRE program should not only strive to address issues common among this group, but also work to identify company-specific opportunities and challenges within the group. Maintaining the pulse of

these companies in aggregate and individually, will provide an advanced knowledge of trends within the group that will hopefully enable the designated party to address issues before reading about them in the newspaper. In addition, many of these companies will have expansion opportunities similar to the successful startups and gazelles, and everything possible should be done to ensure they continue to be located within Bentonville. Equally important, is the object of building a strong working relationship with these companies and encouraging them to consider locating additional corporate functions in Bentonville.

### STRATEGY: DETERMINE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

In addition to the needs-driven program work generated through the above three working categories, several overarching program elements should be considered.

- **Human Resource Committee** – The common denominator among most existing industries is their challenges associated with finding and keeping a skilled workforce. From manufacturers to information technology companies, all must successfully maneuver this issue in order to grow. A standing committee of Human Resources representatives provides the connections and shared knowledge to help each company involved. If there is a group currently meeting that satisfies this need, then the program director for BRE should simply seek to be involved in whatever capacity allowed.
- **Real Estate Committee** – Assisting with real estate solutions for new and existing industry prospects is fundamental to an economic development program. Most solutions will be the result of private brokers and developers, but designated representatives can assist in encouraging development when it sees future demand that is not currently being met. From encouraging projects near downtown to help keep the successful startups and gazelles to ensuring developers understand the City's priorities near the airport, this group can provide invaluable input to the BRE program director.
- **Annual Recognition** – Everyone appreciates being recognized for positive accomplishments. Bentonville also has to acknowledge that for many companies there may be little of substance they can do to facilitate their growth trajectory. Companies should be recognized through an annual awards dinner that brings

together the leaders of its best companies. Not only is this a networking opportunity for the companies themselves, but will highlight the success of Bentonville's most innovative companies and help add to the perception that not just one, but many growing companies call Bentonville home.

- **Business Interest Groups** – Different business/industry groups should be brought together annually to discuss any business or location specific issues. These groups may include manufacturers, corporate headquarters, startup companies, etc.



## EDUCATION/WORKFORCE

### OVERVIEW

Talent is a critical component of attracting and retaining business/industry. As such, ensuring that the educational institutions in the City of Bentonville and surrounding region can provide the talent and programs needed for the target sector opportunities is of the utmost importance to recruiting new business and retaining existing.

### PRIORITY: ENSURE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SUPPORT AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT TARGET SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES AND EXISTING BUSINESS/INDUSTRY IN BENTONVILLE.

## STRATEGIES

DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE TARGET SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES IN BENTONVILLE AND THE REGION

ENSURE THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING NEEDS OF THE TARGET SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES ARE MET

ENSURE THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING NEEDS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ARE MET

### STRATEGY: DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE TARGET BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN BENTONVILLE AND THE REGION

#### ACTION ITEM

Partner with NWACC to identify the skill sets and type of training needed by each of the target business opportunities.

#### ACTION ITEM

Once complete, partner with NWACC to conduct an in-depth inventory to determine which educational programs at NWACC support the target business opportunities and where there is a gap or a need for additional programs.

#### ACTION ITEM

Work with the University of Arkansas (UA) to conduct an in-depth inventory to determine which educational programs at UA support the target sector opportunities and where there is a gap or a need for additional programs.

#### ACTION ITEM

Review and understand programs available through the Bentonville High School vocation program.

### STRATEGY: ENSURE THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING NEEDS OF THE TARGET SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES ARE MET

#### ACTION ITEM

Based on the results of the inventory, work with NWACC to develop new programs or initiatives focused on the target sector opportunities to address any gaps.

#### ACTION ITEM

Based on the results of the inventory, work with UA to develop new programs or initiatives focused on the target sector opportunities to address any gaps that NWACC is unable to address.

### STRATEGY: ENSURE THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING NEEDS OF EXISTING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ARE MET

#### ACTION ITEM

Work with the Shewmaker Center for Workforce Technologies, which supports corporate learning, to inventory and assess existing training programs for local business and industry.

#### ACTION ITEM

Meet with and survey local business and industry as part of the new Business Retention and Expansion program in Bentonville to determine whether their current hiring and training needs are being met.

#### ACTION ITEM

Partner with NWACC and Bentonville Public Schools to address any gaps in hiring and training needs that are identified through the meetings and survey of local business and industry.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

### OVERVIEW

Providing an ecosystem that supports entrepreneurial activity while increasing likelihood of success is an indispensable component of any economic development blueprint, especially in a city like Bentonville.

Bentonville has already had success with many startup companies, mainly those somehow connected to retail due to Walmart's presence, but continuing to attract and maintaining those startup companies by ensuring that such companies have access to the human capital, financial capital, as well as available space that would be attractive to such companies is critical.

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CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



**PRIORITY: CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT IN BENTONVILLE****STRATEGIES**

CREATE A FOCUSED ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM IN BENTONVILLE

DEVELOP INCUBATOR, CO-WORKING AND/OR ACCELERATOR SPACE NEAR DOWNTOWN

CREATE A LOCAL SEED FUND

CREATE LOCAL PROGRAMS TO ACKNOWLEDGE, SUPPORT AND ATTRACT ENTREPRENEURS

CREATE A LOCAL PROGRAM TO EDUCATE YOUNG PEOPLE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ENSURE THAT BENTONVILLE MAKES THE 25 BEST U.S. CITIES FOR TECH STARTUPS LIST IN ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE AND OTHER SIMILAR LISTS

**STRATEGY: CREATE A FOCUSED ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM IN BENTONVILLE**

Although there are programs that support entrepreneurship at the state and regional level, Bentonville needs to ensure that it has a focused effort on entrepreneurship at the local level as well.

**ACTION ITEM**

Create the Bentonville Innovation Center in downtown in partnership with NWACC and designate an individual to lead all entrepreneurial development efforts. The primary focus of this local program should be to know the players, criteria and working programs of all entrepreneurial programs at the state and regional level. The center should be an advocate for Bentonville entrepreneurs as they try to access these various programs, especially the one's that come with a stipend and/or direct assistance.

**ACTION ITEM**

Create a local website to assist entrepreneurs.

**ACTION ITEM**

Coordinate activities with the NWAEA.

**ACTION ITEM**

Coordinate monthly get-togethers for Bentonville entrepreneurs.

**Entrepreneur**<sup>®</sup>  
MAGAZINE

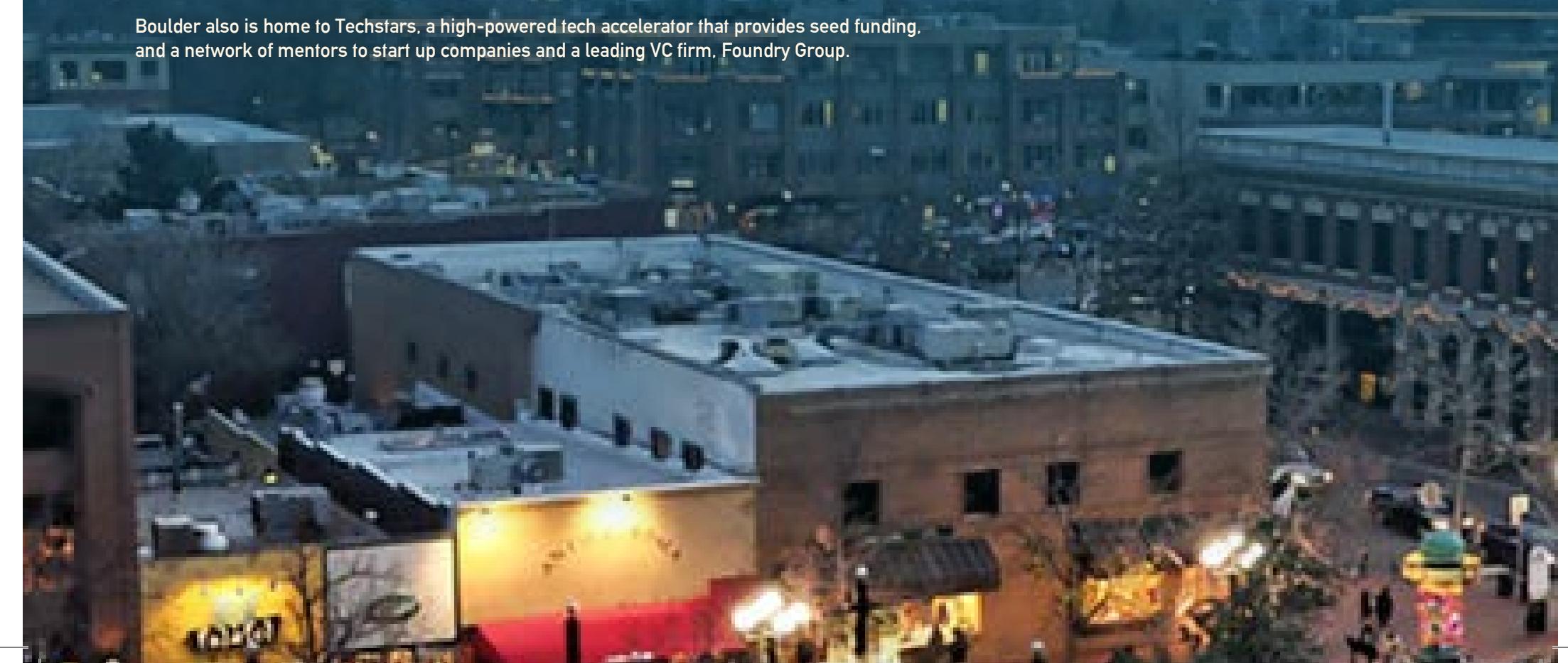
# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL BOULDER, CO

## CREATE AN ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE

THE 25 BEST U.S. CITIES FOR TECH STARTUPS (#1) - ENTREPRENEUR, AUG. 14, 2013

The Silicon Flatirons Center, a Center for Law, Technology and Entrepreneurship at the University of Colorado created the website, <http://www.boulderstartups.org>, to help entrepreneurs become familiar with Boulder, to provide legal, financial and other advice, to learn about startup businesses operating in Boulder and to provide other information about the startup environment in Boulder, including local events.

Boulder also is home to Techstars, a high-powered tech accelerator that provides seed funding, and a network of mentors to start up companies and a leading VC firm, Foundry Group.



## STRATEGY: DEVELOP INCUBATOR, CO-WORKING AND/OR ACCELERATOR SPACE NEAR DOWNTOWN

Although there is incubator and accelerator space in the Northwest Arkansas region, to ensure that Bentonville can continue to be successful in supporting startup growth and also maintain the startup companies that have their origins in Bentonville, incubator, co-working and/or accelerator space should be developed. Incubator space is typically defined as office space in a facility targeted for business startup or entrepreneurial projects that provides lower or no rental fees, access to shared equipment and reduced business taxes to increase the chance the startup will survive and grow. Co-working space is often rent-based like an incubator, but rather than gaining individual workspace, startups/entrepreneurs will often work alongside people from other companies resulting in more peer-to-peer mentorship and greater access to talent. Good co-working spaces tend to attract investors and mentors.

An accelerator is a newer idea built to foster rapid growth of portfolio companies. Startup companies apply for the programs in which they obtain office space, access to technology/equipment, mentorship and funding, typically in exchange for company stock. Accelerator companies are typically farther along in the development process.

### ACTION ITEM

Explore partnership with NWACC on the effort to create an incubator/co-working/accelerator facility.

### ACTION ITEM

Identify one or more locations for an incubator/co-working/accelerator facility. Ideally, the incubator space or co-working space would be located in downtown and the accelerator space could be near downtown, perhaps on North Walton Boulevard. Alternatively, the incubator or co-working and accelerator space could be located in the same facility.

### ACTION ITEM

Determine services to be provided at the facility(ies), which may include subsidized rent, administrative support, mentorships, shared equipment and other.

## STRATEGY: CREATE A LOCAL SEED FUND

Available angel or venture capital funding is another critical factor in attracting and maintaining startup companies. The possibility of creating a local seed fund should be explored through the following action items:

### ACTION ITEM

Contact the Natural State Angel Association to determine opportunities to create a local seed fund.

### ACTION ITEM

Coordinate with New Road Ventures, a local venture capital firm, to determine if it makes sense to partner to create a local seed fund.

### ACTION ITEM

Integrate activities with those of the Northwest Arkansas Council.

## STRATEGY: CREATE LOCAL PROGRAMS TO ACKNOWLEDGE, SUPPORT AND ATTRACT ENTREPRENEURS

It is important that startup companies in Bentonville feel connected to and supported by the Bentonville community in order to ensure that they continue to grow and expand in the city. It is also important that Bentonville continue to attract startup companies and entrepreneurs to the city. As such, local programs should be created to support, acknowledge and attract them as follows:

### ACTION ITEM

Create an awards program to recognize startups each year that have experienced significant growth or have had other innovative successes. This awards program can be coordinated with the annual recognition awards dinner, discussed in the Business Retention and Expansion section previously, that brings together the leaders of the best companies and acknowledges their successes but there should be a special section of this annual recognition program focused just on startup companies.

### ACTION ITEM

Determine an appropriate name for the recognition program.

A nighttime photograph of the St. Louis skyline, featuring the Gateway Arch on the left and various skyscrapers along the riverfront. The lights from the buildings are reflected in the water of the Mississippi River in the foreground.

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI CO-WORKING/INCUBATOR/ACCELERATOR SPACE

T-REX, an 80,000 square foot co-working space and technology incubator, attracts innovation to downtown St. Louis by providing startup entrepreneurs with low cost and flexible space to conceive ideas. Downtown St. Louis is now home to more than 80 startup companies who participate in Startup Weekend and StartLouis.

A scenic view of a city skyline with a large snow-capped mountain in the background. The city buildings are modern and glassy, with one prominent building featuring a large circular structure on top. The foreground is filled with lush green trees. The sky is clear and blue.

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL PORTLAND, OREGON PROVIDE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Portland Seed Fund is a privately managed fund and non-resident accelerator focused on providing emerging companies with capital, mentoring, and connections. The fund has a proven 90-day mentor-led program and over the last two years its first 36 companies collectively raised \$23M in outside capital and created more than 200 jobs.

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL PORTLAND, OREGON PROVIDE STARTUP ASSISTANCE

Startup PDX Challenge is an annual competition designed to connect startups to Portland's entrepreneurial ecosystem and assist the businesses for one year through their early stage growth. Winners of the PDX Challenge will receive a package valued at \$50,000 per company, which includes:

\$15,000 working capital grant (no equity taken)

Free rent for one year

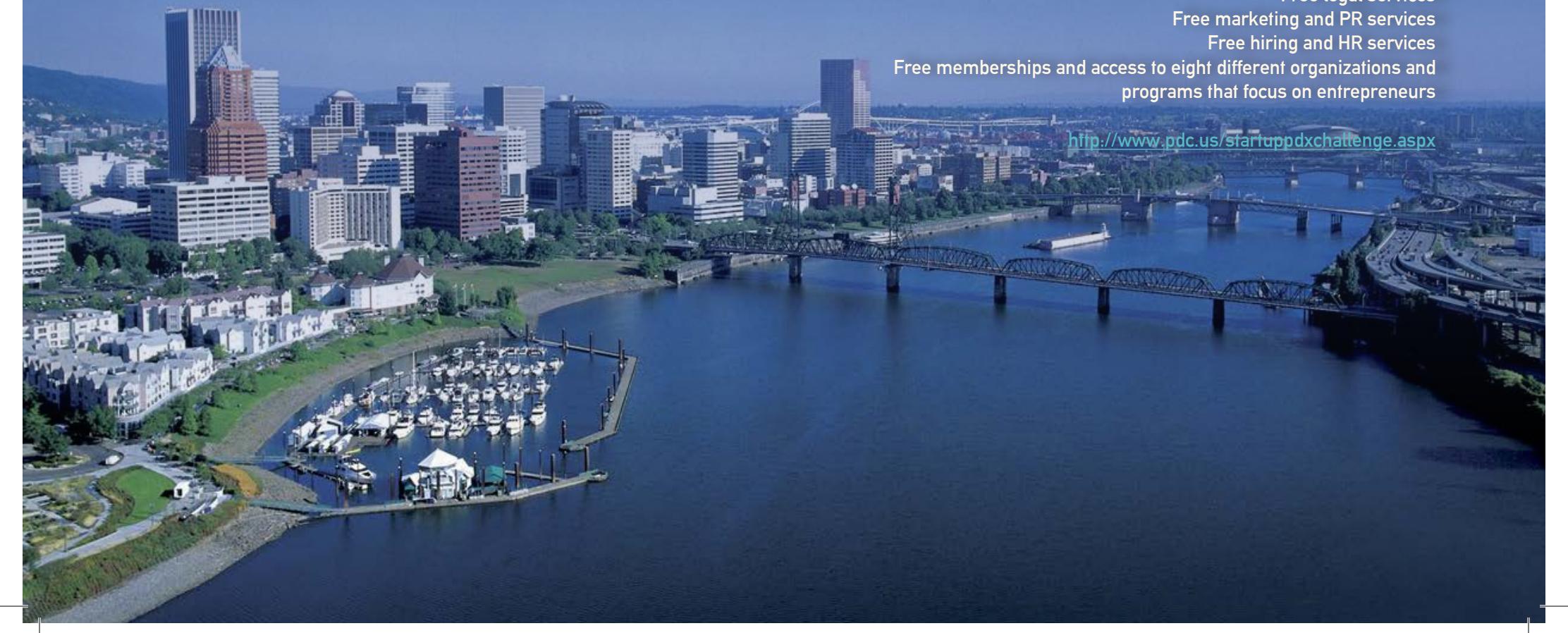
Free legal services

Free marketing and PR services

Free hiring and HR services

Free memberships and access to eight different organizations and programs that focus on entrepreneurs

<http://www.pdc.us/startuppdxchallenge.aspx>



## STRATEGY: CREATE A LOCAL SEED FUND

Available angel or venture capital funding is another critical factor in attracting and maintaining startup companies. The possibility of creating a local seed fund should be explored through the following action items:

### ACTION ITEM

Contact the Natural State Angel Association to determine opportunities to create a local seed fund.

### ACTION ITEM

Coordinate with New Road Ventures, a local venture capital firm, to determine if it makes sense to partner to create a local seed fund.

### ACTION ITEM

Integrate activities with those of the Northwest Arkansas Council.

### ACTION ITEM

Determine an appropriate name for the recognition program.

## INCUBATOR ATTRACTION PROGRAM

Although the Ark program should be supported and companies should be encouraged to apply, if Bentonville creates an incubator facility, it also must focus on attracting and keeping startup companies in the city as well.

### ACTION ITEM

Create an annual competition for early startup companies called the Bentonville Challenge that selects two startup companies annually to receive funding (with no equity commitment), free rent for a year in the incubator space to be developed and other services.

## STRATEGY: CREATE LOCAL PROGRAMS TO ACKNOWLEDGE, SUPPORT AND ATTRACT ENTREPRENEURS

It is important that startup companies in Bentonville feel connected to and supported by the Bentonville community in order to ensure that they continue to grow and expand in the city. It is also important that Bentonville continue to attract startup companies and entrepreneurs to the city. As such, local programs should be created to support, acknowledge and attract them as follows:

### ACTION ITEM

Create an awards program to recognize startups each year that have experienced significant growth or have had other innovative successes. This awards program can be coordinated with the annual recognition awards dinner, discussed in the Business Retention and Expansion section previously, that brings together the leaders of the best companies and acknowledges their successes but there should be a special section of this annual recognition program focused just on startup companies.

## STRATEGY: CREATE A LOCAL PROGRAM TO EDUCATE YOUNG PEOPLE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Creating an entrepreneurial environment in Bentonville must also include educating its young people on entrepreneurship and its importance. The Arkansas Fellowship program is focused on graduating college seniors who would like to become entrepreneurs and should be utilized for that purpose but there does not appear to be a current state or regional program focused specifically on educating young people at the primary school level on entrepreneurship.

### ACTION ITEM

Develop a local program in coordination with NWACC and the public schools to educate middle and high school students on entrepreneurship.

### ACTION ITEM

Name the program.

A vibrant aerial photograph of the Nashville skyline, featuring the AT&T Building (a prominent green pyramid-shaped skyscraper) and other modern buildings. In the foreground, the John Seigenthaler Pedestrian Bridge, a white truss bridge, spans a river. The sky is clear and blue.

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL NASHVILLE, TN HONOR LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

The Nashville Chamber and The Nashville Entrepreneurial Center (EC) developed the annual NEXT Awards to acknowledge and honor the area's most innovative entrepreneurs and businesses that have experienced significant job and revenue growth.

## STRATEGY: CREATE A LOCAL PROGRAM TO EDUCATE YOUNG PEOPLE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Creating an entrepreneurial environment in Bentonville must also include educating its young people on entrepreneurship and its importance. The Arkansas Fellowship program is focused on graduating college seniors who would like to become entrepreneurs and should be utilized for that purpose but there does not appear to be a current state or regional program focused specifically on educating young people at the primary school level on entrepreneurship.

### ACTION ITEM

Develop a local program in coordination with NWACC and the public schools to educate middle and high school students on entrepreneurship.

### ACTION ITEM

Name the program.

## STRATEGY: ENSURE THAT BENTONVILLE MAKES THE 25 BEST U.S. CITIES FOR TECH STARTUPS LIST AND OTHER SIMILAR LIST

Every year Entrepreneur magazine publishes a list of the 25 Best U.S. Cities for Tech Startups list, which is based on a report from the Ewing Mario Kauffman Foundation. The research focuses on high-tech startups specifically, defining them as new businesses with a concentration of employees in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

### ACTION ITEM

Review the criteria from the report and Entrepreneur magazine on how cities make the list.

### ACTION ITEM

Develop a plan to ensure that Bentonville makes this list within the next five years and continues to stay on the list.

### ACTION ITEM

Explore other entrepreneurial/startup lists to pursue.



# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL CHATTANOOGA LAUNCH PROGRAM

The Chattanooga LAUNCH High School Entrepreneurship program exists to teach business fundamentals to high school students over a semester, focused on teaching them to launch and grow successful entrepreneurial ventures.

The program focuses on market opportunities, viability, feasibility, innovation, and basic concepts required to develop a competent business plan.

Upon completion of the program, students present and pitch their small business plans at a regional competition, held at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The team who wins is awarded a \$10,000 prize of start-up financing and services.

# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL GRAND JUNCTION, CO SUPPORT YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

The Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) is a year-long program that teaches middle and high school students how to start and run their own REAL businesses. YEA! was developed at the University of Rochester in 2004 with the support of a grant from the Kauffman Foundation.

YEA! guides high school students through the process of starting and running a legitimate business or social movement over the course of a full academic year. YEA! has graduated almost 600 students over the past seven years, who have started almost 450 businesses and social movements.

<http://www.gjchamber.org/yea.asp>

# 25 BEST U.S. CITIES FOR TECH STARTUPS

A photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is filled with vibrant orange, red, and yellow hues, with some darker clouds. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several skyscrapers are visible against the bright sky. In the background, there are mountains. The overall atmosphere is a mix of urban and natural beauty.

Boulder, Colorado  
Fort Collins-Loveland, Colorado  
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, California  
Cambridge-Newton-Framingham, Massachusetts  
Seattle, Washington  
Denver, Colorado  
San Francisco, California  
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Virginia-Maryland  
Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Cheyenne, Wyoming  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
Corvallis, Oregon  
Raleigh-Cary, North Carolina  
Huntsville, Alabama  
Provo-Orem, Utah  
Bend, Oregon  
Austin-Round Rock, Texas  
Missoula, Montana  
Grand Junction, Colorado  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota  
Bethesda-Frederick-Rockville, Maryland  
Durham-Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, Oregon-Washington  
Wilmington, Delaware  
Ames, Iowa

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

### OVERVIEW

The availability of sites and buildings to compete and win new investment is critical to being successful in economic development. Although Bentonville appears to have available property, there does not seem to be a clear and concise source of information on that property, including business and industrial parks located in the city, and there is some confusion on the availability of property that is zoned industrial. Walmart's commitment to return manufacturing jobs to the United States makes it critical that industrial property is available and ready for development in Bentonville. There is also a lack of office space to support future startup companies that grow into the next phase of their development. For future economic development success, which includes successful attraction of the target sector opportunities, the identification, development and marketing of commercial and industrial property is critical.

The City of Bentonville has 52 available retail spaces. The range of available space for these buildings is 3,930 square feet to 34,305 square feet. In addition to these retail spaces, the city also has 206 office spaces available. The following table provides a breakdown of those spaces by range of available square footage as of June 2014.

Available Office Space in Bentonville	
Square Footage	Available Space
2,999 Square Feet and Below	82
3,000 to 5,999 Square Feet	58
6,000 to 9,999 Square Feet	32
10,000 to 28,500 Square Feet	34

Bentonville Plaza II has 256,500 square feet available.

THE CITY OF  
BENTONVILLE  
HAS APPROXIMATELY  
**52 AVAILABLE**  
**RETAIL SPACES AND**  
**206 AVAILABLE**  
**OFFICE SPACES.**

Available Buildings in Bentonville			
Building Name	Address	Type	Square Feet
CrossMar Park Building 3	SW of SW Rainbow Farm Road and SW Regional Airport Blvd	Industrial	550,000
CrossMar Park Building 2	SW of SW Rainbow Farm Road and SW Regional Airport Blvd	Industrial	150,000
CrossMar Park Building 1	SW of SW Rainbow Farm Road and SW Regional Airport Blvd	Industrial	150,000
2601 SE J Street	2601 SE J Street	Industrial	110,000
507 SE E Street	507 SE E Street	Industrial	54,000
Hardcastle Business Complex*	1302 SW Melissa Drive	Commercial	50,114
2503 SE J Street	2503 SE J Street	Industrial	43,750
2714 SE Otis Corley Drive	2714 SE Corley Drive	Industrial	43,731
2501 SE Otis Corley Drive	2501 SE Otis Corley Drive	Industrial	30,000
Polo Park Business Campus	8200 SW Regional Airport Blvd	Industrial	30,000
OB149-Katy Building*	5121 Runway Drive	Commercial	22,288
2610 SE J Street	2610 SE J Street	Industrial	20,000
8728 W McNelly Road	8728 W McNelly Road	Industrial	14,075
Agracel Professional Plaza*	3101 SW I Street	Commercial	10,250
9949 Highway 72	9949 Highway 72	Industrial	7,500
302 SW Regional Airport Blvd	302 SW Regional Airport Blvd	Industrial	5,940

Building Name	Address	Type	Square Feet
903 SE 21st Street	903 SE 21st Street	Industrial	5,250
909 SE 21st Street	909 SE 21st Street	Industrial	5,000
803 SW 12th Street	803 SW 12th Street	Industrial	2,300
Piedmont	2709 SE Otis Corley Drive	Industrial	1,800

\* These buildings are listed on Arkansas Site Selector, while the others were pulled directly from Bentonville Bella Vista's Economic Development page (using Xceligent). The two sources contain no duplicate entries.

CrossMar Supplier Park, originally called Gateway Park, which is scheduled to open in October 2014, includes a 150,000 speculative industrial building and a total of 180 acres. CrossMar Supplier Park is located across the street from a Walmart distribution center and has 11 more sites available.

The City of Bentonville also offers 193 undeveloped or vacant land parcels (As of 6/14/2014). The largest of these is a 159-acre site at Ginn Road and SW Anglin Road, which is currently zoned as residential. The next largest site is a 157-acre site located just northeast of Highway 12, which is currently zoned as mixed-use.

Amongst those sites, there also is the Bentonville Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC) West Industrial Park, a 121-acre site located at SW Minuteman Avenue and Artillery Drive.

## PRIORITY: IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP MORE EXCEPTIONAL PROPERTY/FACILITIES IN BENTONVILLE

### STRATEGIES

ENSURE THAT COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY IS PROPERLY INVENTORIED AND MARKETED.

EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOGISTICS PARK AND BUSINESS PARK FOCUSED ON LIGHT MANUFACTURING NEAR NORTHWEST ARKANSAS REGIONAL AIRPORT.

EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF CLASS A OFFICE SPACE OR A BUSINESS/TECHNOLOGY PARK DEVELOPMENT ON THE NORTH WALTON CORRIDOR.

CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A CONVENTION/CONFERENCE CENTER.

## STRATEGY: ENSURE THAT COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY IS PROPERLY INVENTORIED AND MARKETED

All available commercial and industrial property in Bentonville should be identified and marketed on the Site and Building databases of the State of Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas, and any local property databases. These databases must also be updated on a regular basis.

### ACTION ITEM

Conduct an inventory of all available property in Bentonville.

### ACTION ITEM

Verify that all available property appears on state, regional and local databases.

### ACTION ITEM

Designate a representative of the city to be responsible for updating and maintaining information on all databases.



## STRATEGY: EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOGISTICS PARK AND BUSINESS PARK FOCUSED ON LIGHT MANUFACTURING NEAR NORTHWEST ARKANSAS REGIONAL AIRPORT

With the focus on the transportation and warehousing target, as well as light manufacturing with Walmart's commitment to return manufacturing to the U.S., Bentonville has available property near the airport that should be developed and marketed as a Logistics Park that would focus on attracting distribution and logistics companies, as well as a combined or separate Business Park focused on light manufacturing.

### ACTION ITEM

Partner with the Northwest Arkansas Council on the development of the Logistics Park and/or Business Park.

### ACTION ITEM

Identify property, consider options on the property if not owned by the city and conduct a feasibility study on cost to develop the proposed parks.

### ACTION ITEM

Explore the idea of eventually developing an multimodal Logistics Park and/or Business Park, which ideally would include rail access to the site. Multimodalism refers to transportation of goods between two points by more than one mode of transport, which could be road-air, road-rail, road-rail-coastal or any other combination.

### ACTION ITEM

Explore the idea of extending rail to the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport (XNA) and potential multimodal Logistics Park and/or Business Park to be developed nearby. The idea of extending a rail line to the airport was previously explored in a May 2006 Air Cargo and Freight Transportation Access Assessment Study of XNA, and was also recommended as part of the Northwest Arkansas Regional Study. The feasibility of the extension of the rail line should be re-explored in partnership with the Northwest Arkansas Council and XNA.

## STRATEGY: EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF CLASS A OFFICE SPACE OR A BUSINESS/TECHNOLOGY PARK DEVELOPMENT ON THE NORTH WALTON CORRIDOR

North Walton Boulevard is an active but older commercial corridor that is home to a number of dated buildings and storefront vacancies. There has been a lack of development of North Walton Boulevard as well. The North Walton Boulevard Corridor Enhancement Plan was adopted in February 2013 by the City of Bentonville. The focus of the plan is "to improve access management, encourage complimentary land uses, inject pleasing aesthetics, and identify development strategies to create a sustainable and economically vibrant commercial corridor."

As previously indicated, there is a need for new office space development to support the location of the identified target sector opportunities to Bentonville, most of which are professional employment type companies. The North Walton Boulevard Corridor may be an excellent location for an office or Business/Technology Park development, especially with all of the improvements planned or in process under the Enhancement Plan.

### ACTION ITEM

Identify an existing site and/or buildings along the North Walton Corridor for development of Class A office space or a Business/Technology Park.

### ACTION ITEM

Target developers of Class A office space for the development.

### ACTION ITEM

Consider incentives for developers to entice them to invest in this project. Possible incentives that could be offered to developers may include property tax reductions through Tax Increment Financing, expedited permitting, fee reductions, free or reduced land cost (if the land is city-owned), sale-leaseback arrangements, or incentives for developers building to LEED or to other sustainable building standards.



## SUSTAINABILITY

### OVERVIEW

Sustainability can be defined in many ways, but almost every definition addresses the social, financial and environmental vitality of a community. Corporate America, led in many ways by Walmart, has made a very strong commitment to sustainability in recent years. One of the reasons for this commitment is a focus on the triple bottom line of "people, planet, and profit." Consumers are making purchasing decisions based on the perceived strength of corporate commitments to

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**"WE ALL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE. BUT EVEN MORE, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY. WE NEED TO BE SUSTAINABLE COMPANIES AND COUNTRIES MADE UP OF PEOPLE WHO LIVE SUSTAINABLE LIVES. IF WE DO THAT...THIS GENERATION WILL LEAVE A HEALTHIER HUMANITY AND A HEALTHIER PLANET FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS."**

LEE SCOTT, FORMER PRESIDENT AND CEO, WALMART

environmental and social sustainability, and today's students and recent graduates want to attend colleges that practice sustainability and want to live and work in sustainable communities, making the issue a key component of talent recruitment.

As a result of corporate America's commitment to sustainability, communities are now making huge strides in their own sustainability efforts. More and more companies are looking to invest and locate in communities that embrace sustainability and provide an infrastructure that enables the company to practice their own sustainability initiatives.

In fact, sustainable economic development, which is becoming increasingly important in today's competitive environment, considers the same triple bottom line, balanced against the need for economic prosperity. It is important for Bentonville to acknowledge the role of sustainability as a key component of its comprehensive economic development program. As part of this project, a Sustainable Inventory of Bentonville's activities was conducted and is outlined in the Supporting Documentation to this Blueprint. Bentonville's current Growing Smarter activities are a very strong beginning to this program, but it can be enhanced with the following strategic priorities.

## PRIORITY: CONTINUE TO BE EXCEPTIONAL IN AND EXPAND ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF SUSTAINABILITY

## STRATEGIES

DEVELOP A COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM FOCUSED ON SUSTAINABILITY

EXPAND BENTONVILLE'S SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

DEVELOP ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS FOR RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

DEVELOP RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR BUSINESSES

PROMOTE BENTONVILLE'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY AND RELATED PROGRAMS AT THE LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL

### STRATEGY: DEVELOP A COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM FOCUSED ON SUSTAINABILITY

Educating the public and making resources available to assist residents helps to ensure that the community embraces sustainable activities and programs. Bentonville should reframe the concept of sustainability among local stakeholders by developing a more defined community outreach program to further enhance understanding of sustainability and the role it plays in the future development of Bentonville.

#### ACTION ITEM

Create online resources to encourage residents and businesses to become more sustainable. This online presence, which could be part of the city's website, should provide a single source of information for a wide variety of programs, including waste reduction, energy efficiency, natural resources protection, community wellness, and recreation.

#### ACTION ITEM

Develop a dynamic smart phone app that provides access to sustainability information in Bentonville. The app could be focused on locations for sustainable resources. It would serve as a very valuable source of information related to Bentonville's local economy through the farmers' market, supporting locally-owned business, and community gardening.

#### ACTION ITEM

Offer a series of educational programs to assist residents in becoming more sustainable. These programs should be targeted to both children and adults and may provide an opportunity to partner with the Stribling Sustainability Institute at NorthWest Arkansas Community College (NWACC). A Lunch and Learn program for adults could provide information on making homes more energy efficient, reducing household waste, growing and preparing local produce, and using organic and drought tolerant landscaping, among others. Additionally, NWACC could work with the Bentonville Public Schools to offer educational programs to students.



# EXCEPTIONAL MODEL NASHVILLE, TN

## SUPPORT YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS NASHVITALITY MOBILE APP

The City of Nashville has developed a mobile app as part of its NashVitality program. The app is a mobile guide to various healthy and active lifestyle amenities in the city. It provides interactive maps for walking, hiking, biking, and water access, in addition to information about where to recycle and tools to be more energy efficient. Each section of the app includes an "Explore Near Me" option, which will display results in all categories in the area. In addition, the app includes a tracking tool for the Mayor's Walk 100 Miles campaign, which allows users to log miles for the challenge. Development of the NashVitality app was funded with a U.S. Department of Energy grant and ARRA funding.

<http://www.nashville.gov/Mayors-Office/Priorities/Health/NashVitality.aspx>

## STRATEGY: EXPAND BENTONVILLE'S SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Bentonville should expand its focus on activities and programs that support local economies and lead to a more sustainable community, which may include the following:

### ACTION ITEM

Create a Buy Bentonville program that encourages residents to shop locally. A program of this kind enhances the livability of the community by ensuring the stability and diversity of the local economy. A number of tools can be used to develop a buy local program. The first is often development of a local products directory that is available online or in print to showcase locally owned businesses and the products they sell. Cash mobs are a newer tool, designed around social media, to organize groups to shop on a single day at a local business, with participants committing to spend a pre-determined amount, usually \$10 to \$20 with the local merchant.

### ACTION ITEM

Develop one or more community gardens to encourage greater use of local produce. Community gardens increase a sense of community and stewardship, in addition to providing fresher, healthier food options for many people. These gardens can be on public or private land and often include small individual plots. They can also be used to provide fresh produce to low income residents who might not otherwise have access to healthy food options.

## STRATEGY: DEVELOP ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The environmental components of a sustainability program are those that promote equilibrium within the natural systems and encourage positive growth. They avoid unnecessary disturbances to the environment, whenever possible, and mitigate those disturbances that cannot be avoided. Energy efficiency initiatives are often among the first to be addressed by community sustainability programs.

### ACTION ITEM

Create an Energy Scorecard program for Bentonville residential electric customers. This program would provide personalized energy usage feedback to customers on a quarterly basis and offer tips to encourage residents to employ energy saving initiatives. Customers will better understand their energy consumption patterns and see how they compare to other homes of similar size.

### ACTION ITEM

Provide energy audits to business customers. These audits, performed by a professional technician, determine if and where a building is losing energy and how to correct problems causing the energy loss. Audits often include checking for leaks, examining insulation, inspecting duct work, testing blower doors, and checking lighting. It also includes recommendations for measures that will make the structure more efficient, which ultimately leads to cost savings.

## STRATEGY: DEVELOP RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR BUSINESSES

The City of Bentonville already offers single-stream residential recycling pick-up throughout the city. It includes recycling for aluminum, plastics, paper, and cardboard. A next step for Bentonville would be to offer similar services to Bentonville businesses.

### ACTION ITEM

Launch an online survey of existing business and industry to determine how local business/industry is currently handling recycling and interest in the city providing single-stream business recycling pick-up.

### ACTION ITEM

Conduct a feasibility study of potential cost to provide single-stream business recycling pick-up throughout the city.

## STRATEGY: PROMOTE BENTONVILLE'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY AND RELATED PROGRAMS AT THE LOCAL, REGIONAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Based on the Sustainable Inventory conducted for this project, the City of Bentonville is already doing a lot in the area of sustainability. However, these efforts do not seem well known to the public.

### ACTION ITEM

Based on the Sustainable Inventory, develop marketing messages for Bentonville specific to its key sustainable initiatives, especially those that support local business and industry.

### ACTION ITEM

Ensure that the marketing messages appear on the website of the primary economic development organization for Bentonville.

### ACTION ITEM

Create a part-time position for a Director of Sustainability for Bentonville that focuses on promoting Bentonville's activities in this area.

