



**Leading Business,  
Leading Springdale.**

## **Economic Report – April 2010**

### **Ballpark District Planning**

**Elected Officials, Private Sector Hear Details, Provide Feedback**

The future of development in west Springdale was the topic of discussion April 22 at a Chamber-organized work session scheduled for members of the Springdale City Council, Planning Commission, Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and Economic Development Council.

With only two Council members able to attend, follow-up meetings will be scheduled specifically to brief the Council on progress made.

Architect Charles Hodges, whose firm completed Ballpark District market research and master planning for the Chamber, updated the group on the next level of detail his firm has completed with regard to design elements that could be included in an overlay development district. Meetings earlier in the day included land owners and city staff as work continues to develop agreement in consistency of design.

Hodges showed the group how native stone used in Arvest Ballpark could be used in every element of development to create a “campus” that would be highly attractive to developers and those driving by the area.

Perry Webb reminded the group that the most recent feasibility study of the area showed it capable of generating \$13.6 million in annual sales tax revenue, with \$4 million retained by the city annually.

Hodges likened the process to a football game with the work nearing the goal line, explaining there’s lot of work remaining but a plan is in place to get into the end zone.

Work is underway on a draft ordinance incorporating the elements of an overlay district that will require public hearings and approval by the Planning Commission and City Council.



### **Springdale Top Place to Live**

**1 of 4 Arkansas Cities Named to RelocateAmerica List of 100**

Springdale has been named as one of the 100 Top Places to Live in 2010 by RelocateAmerica. Springdale is one of only four cities in Arkansas to make the list.

The ranking focused on communities poised for recovery and future growth. Springdale earned high marks for strong local leadership, employment opportunities, improving real estate markets and outstanding amenities.

The ranking mentioned low unemployment, low crime, excellent schools, cultural attractions, recreational opportunities, sporting events and more.

Springdale’s Rodeo of the Ozarks was highlighted as was the city’s proximity to the corporate headquarters of Tyson Foods, Wal-Mart and JB Hunt Transport.

The ranking referenced the diversity of housing available in Springdale as well as its housing costs 3-10 percent less than surrounding cities.

Other Arkansas cities on the list were Little Rock, Hot Springs Village and Bella Vista.

### **ICSC Convention**

**Springdale Team to Attend Retail Meeting in May**

The Chamber is again taking an aggressive approach to future retail development by leading a team of Springdale leaders and developers to the annual International Council of Shopping Centers RECON Global Real Estate Convention, May 23-25.



**International Council  
of Shopping Centers**

The Springdale team, which will include Mayor Sprouse, has scheduled meetings with national retailers, vendors and developers during the convention to continue past dialogue regarding the city’s Ballpark District, ongoing work to construct a new I-540 interchange serving the area as well as the market research and master planning for the area commissioned by the Chamber.

## Project Updates & Activity

### Expansion Opportunity, State Incentives Highlight Quarter

First quarter activity in Springdale's economy includes news that two Springdale companies have benefitted from the Chamber's efforts to obtain state grants to fund expansions, inquiries from several businesses and news of a potential expansion by another Springdale firm:

- NanoMech/Duralor and A.E.R.T. of Springdale received grants from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission totaling more than \$300,000. The two companies will use those funds to expand existing operations.
- The Chamber is engaged with a local company and the AEDC to assist in efforts that could result in the company's expansion by as many as 250 jobs before the end of 2010.
- The Chamber made application to Google in its national competition to select a U.S. city for its experimental fiber-to-the-home broadband network.
- The Chamber again met locally with the international recycling firm looking to locate a \$250 million investment in the region.
- The Chamber consulted with two restaurant entities considering Springdale for expansion. One is currently searching for interested franchisees in the region to operate a Springdale location. The Chamber continues to seek interested parties.
- The Chamber began discussions with an international firm potentially interested in relocating its research and development operations to the Springdale Technology Park.
- The Chamber learned Springdale continues to be considered for two national expansion projects it has made proposals for.
- Two entrepreneurial firms, both involved in the environmental energy field, consulted with the Chamber about potential investment opportunities.

## Arkansas Site Center

### Online Views High for Springdale's Available Sites

The Chamber brought Steve Jones of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission to town to conduct on-site measurements of three buildings recently added to the Arkansas Site Selection Center.

The Chamber continues to receive high praise from the AEDC for its aggressive implementation of the online site database. Since adding Springdale's inventory to the site, there have been 284 views of available greenfield sites and 57 views of available buildings by potential employers and their representatives.

## Economic Dev. Council

### Business Leaders Hear Updates from Manufacturers

The Springdale Economic Development Council held its first quarter meeting March 16 with Mayor Sprouse updating the Council on ongoing city infrastructure projects including the I-540 interchange, Wagon Wheel Road and Johnson Road.



The Council also heard updates on city sales tax revenues, Census response by residents and the Walton Arts Center's ongoing search for a new location in the region.



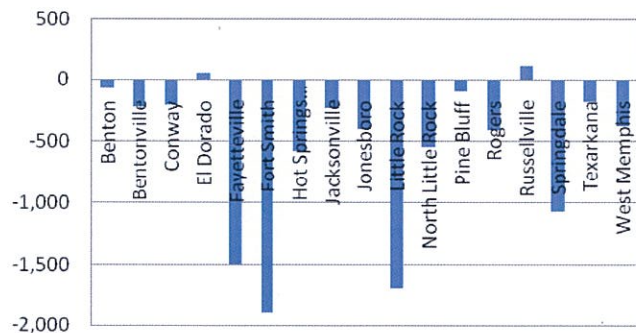
Representatives from Cargill, Danaher Tool and A.E.R.T. were featured guests and provided the Council with an overview of their companies, how each had coped during the economic recession and what opportunities and challenges lay ahead in the next 12 months. The three companies employ more than 2,000 in Springdale.

## Major Cities Employment Falls

Arkansas' four largest cities predictably took the largest hit on employment losses in January 2010 when compared to January 2009 and only two of the state's largest cities saw employment gains.

Fort Smith, Little Rock, Fayetteville and Springdale each had fewer jobs in January 2010 than a year before — with half of Springdale's losses coming from two employers. Russellville and El Dorado, each having suffered major job losses in 2006-07, saw small job gains during the same time period.

### January Employment Decline 2009 v 2010

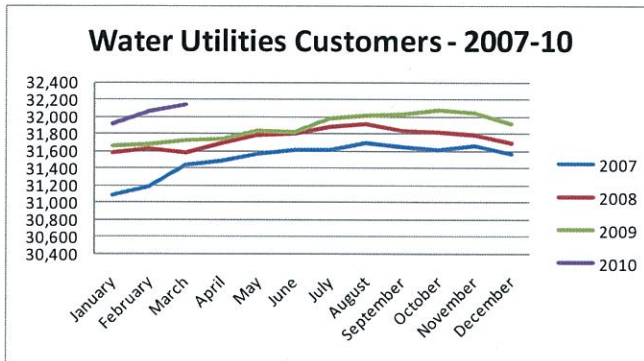


## Key Indicators Climbing

### Water, Electric Customers Reach High-Water Mark

Through March of 2010, both the Springdale Water Utilities and Ozarks Electric Cooperative report their highest customer totals. There were 32,134 water customers and 11,092 Ozarks Electric customers in the month of March.

Springdale Water Utilities surpassed the 32,000 customer figure in August, September, October and December of 2009 but Ozarks Electric has not surpassed 11,000 customers previously.



## Walton Arts Center Search

### Chamber Leading Efforts to Refine Regional Response

The Springdale Chamber and Mayor Doug Sprouse have been actively engaged in recent negotiations to extend the deadline for submission for new sites for the Walton Arts Center.

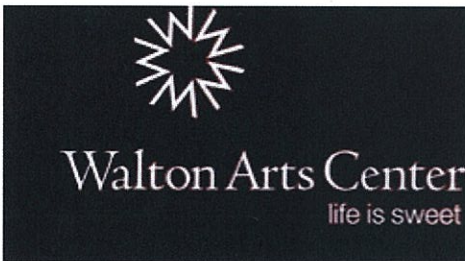
In his roll as president of the Northwest Arkansas Chambers of Commerce, Perry Webb organized multiple

meetings with representatives from the Walton Arts Center and officials from NWA cities.

An original submission date of mid-March was untenable for every city in Northwest Arkansas. After extending its submission deadline to August 2, Walton Arts Center representatives met with mayors and chamber executives from Springdale, Fayetteville, Rogers, Bentonville and Siloam Springs to finalize the process.

The Chamber has engaged with multiple land owners and Realtors with suitable property for the Walton Arts Center project. All suitable sites will be included in the August proposal.

The Walton Arts Center has explained the total project has an estimated \$180 million price tag.



## Interchange Lobbying

### Springdale Team Gets Ear of Transportation Ranking Member

The Chamber's annual lobbying trip to Washington D.C. was held April 13-15 with 11 Springdale leaders participating including Mayor Doug Sprouse.

The team updated Rep. Boozman, Sen. Lincoln and Sen. Pryor on the status of the city's Don Tyson Parkway interchange. Each pledged any support necessary to insure speedy project approval through the Federal Highway Administration.



Rep. John Mica (R-Fla), the ranking member of the House Transportation Committee, and minority staff director Jim Tymon, were extremely receptive to the project and complimentary of the decision by the Springdale City Council to financially partner in the project.

Mica and Tymon each noted it would likely be 2011 before Congress would begin the process of writing a new federal transportation bill.

## Chrysler Dealership Appeal

### Chamber, Mayor Assist Efforts to Regain Major Brand

In an effort to assist Springdale Dodge in its effort to appeal the decision by Chrysler to remove its franchise from Springdale, the Chamber has worked with the owners of the dealership to craft



a response letter than could be used in the company's appeal process to arbitrators considering the case.

In addition to a letter from Chamber president Perry Webb and from Mayor Doug Sprouse, the Chamber also provided supporting demographic data owners could use to show Chrysler that unique economic hardships like the 2009 ice storm skewed sales numbers for what has been and is projected to continue to be a strong Springdale economy.

The letter also pointed out the strategic location of the Springdale dealership on newly opened Don Tyson Parkway as well as the connectivity the Parkway will enjoy with the opening of a new I-540 interchange.

The letter noted the willingness and ability of Springdale's residents to invest in infrastructure is proof of the city's past and future economic vitality. The letter noted few cities in the United State as large or as centrally located are without a Chrysler/Dodge dealership.