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**METROPLAN RELEASES 2022 ECONOMIC REVIEW AND OUTLOOK  
Water in Central Arkansas**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR, December 19, 2022** — Metroplan announces the release of the *2022 Economic Review and Outlook*, chronicling economic trends for the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

This edition of the *Metrotrends Economic Review and Outlook* looks at the issue of **water in Central Arkansas**, and its impact on the regional economy.

An abundant supply of high-quality water confers an economic advantage upon Central Arkansas. The region's water flows downstream from thinly-populated elevated regions in the Ouachita Mountains and the Ozark Plateau. There are no major sources of industrial or residential contaminants. Central Arkansas Water has never detected dangerous PFAS in local water. The water is inexpensive and top-quality, requiring less pre-industrial treatment for specialty uses. This could make the region competitive for solar cell and microchip manufacturers, which require large volumes of inexpensive high-quality water.

The issue also covers the following themes:

- The Little Rock regional economy is recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. By January 2022, total jobs exceeded the previous peak in January 2020, before Covid hit.
- The mix of jobs by industry is shifting, while total jobs are climbing. Gains in transportation, warehousing, financial, and trade sectors more than made up for losses in government and business services.
- When Amazon announced two large new facilities in Little Rock and North Little Rock in late 2020, other firms quickly followed.
- Central Arkansas is becoming a logistics hub region, with major job gains from move-ins like Amazon, Lowe's, Dollar General and others. Since early 2021, the region has gained about 4,000 new jobs in warehousing and transportation.
- Manufacturing has been steadily gaining jobs following the Covid recession of 2020.
- The pace of local housing construction remained robust during the first half of 2022, with 980 new single-family and 576 multi-family units under construction.
- Most cities saw fewer permits compared with the first half of 2021, but Benton and North Little Rock saw an increase. Jacksonville also saw an uptick in permits.
- Single-family housing is sensitive to interest rates, and early statistics suggest a slowdown in the pace of new single-family construction. A housing bust may be developing.
- Multi-family construction was almost entirely in Little Rock, with 567 new units.

Read the full publication by visiting: <https://metroplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/EconomicReview-2022.pdf>

Metroplan publishes *Metrotrends* twice yearly. The spring/summer edition is usually the *Demographic Review and Outlook*; the fall/winter edition is the *Economic Review and Outlook*. All articles, tables and figures are available for republishing with credit. This issue is available as a PDF or paper copy from Metroplan.

Metroplan is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the four-county region of Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski, and Saline counties. It is a voluntary association of local governments that has operated since 1955.

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