

METRO TRENDS

Economic Review and Outlook

DECEMBER 2024

TOURISM & RECREATION
IN CENTRAL ARKANSAS

- The Regional Economy in 2024
- Tourism and Recreation in Central Arkansas
- Construction Value
- Housing Growth Holds Steady
- Economic Outlook • Statistical Supplement



METROPLAN

Metroplan's *Economic Review and Outlook* is an annual chronicle providing economic data and insight for the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA.

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Photographs by Lynn Bell and Jonathan Lupton except where noted. Cover photos by Metroplan, the City of Jacksonville, and iStockphoto.com.

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About this Edition

This edition of the *Metrotrends Economic Review and Outlook* newsletter covers the customary economic data trends, but puts its focus on tourism and recreation. It presents enterprises and activities that attract visitors from outside the Central Arkansas region, while also providing recreation and entertainment options for local residents. It

covers a lot of activities like trail biking, kayaking, go-carts, art museums, running, basketball, volleyball and golfing, to name a few. Together they impact local quality of life, and even help drive the economy. Reading about them, you might even discover something interesting to do right here in Central Arkansas you had never imagined before.

About Metroplan

Metroplan is a voluntary association of local governments that has operated by interlocal agreement since 1955. Originally formed as the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission of Pulaski County, Metroplan now has members in five counties of the six-county metro area. Metroplan is the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) under Title 23 of the United States Code.

Metroplan serves as the regional voice on issues affecting Central Arkansas, develops transportation plans required by federal law, convenes stakeholders to deal with common issues, and provides information and staff resources to our member local governments, the business community, and the public. As part of that mission, Metroplan publishes *Metrotrends* twice yearly. The spring/summer edition is the *Demographic Review and Outlook*; the fall/winter edition is the *Economic Review and Outlook*.

About CARTS

The Central Arkansas Regional Transportation Study, or CARTS, is the cooperative effort by the participating communities, transportation providers and many other interested parties to develop a long-range transportation plan for the metropolitan area.

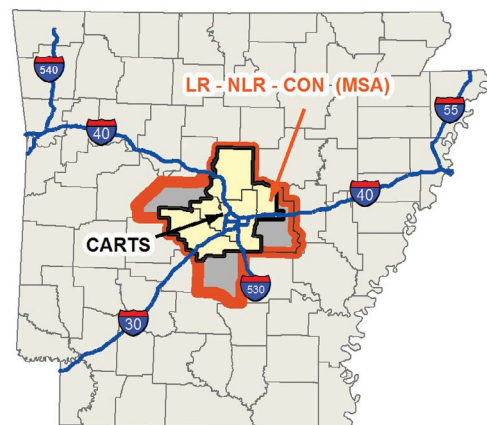


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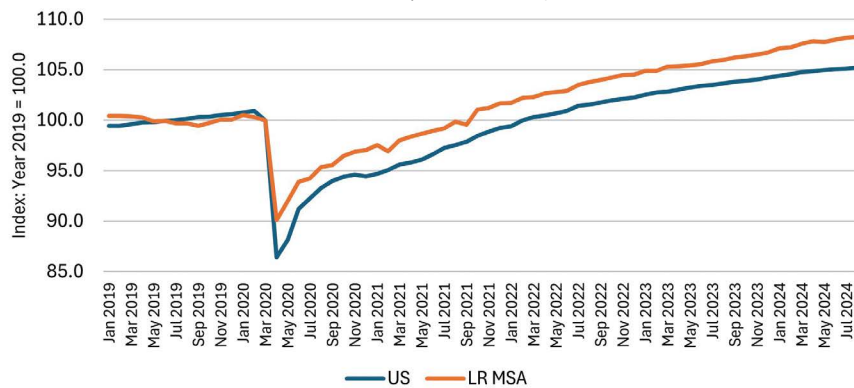
THE REGIONAL ECONOMY IN 2024

The Central Arkansas region is prospering, with job and income growth running steadily. By some measures, such as job momentum, the region is running just a bit faster than the U.S. average. For example, Central Arkansas saw year-over-year job growth of 2.2 percent for August 2024, compared with a U.S. average of 1.5 percent. Employment growth in the past two years has run slower, however, than in the 2020–2022 years when the regional and U.S. economies were recovering from the Covid recession.



CoorsTek, which fabricates engineered ceramics in Benton, has generated investment and jobs in Saline County.

Job Trend January 2019–August 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Figures are seasonally adjusted.

The slowdown has been caused in part by high interest rates, so the Federal Reserve's 0.5 point rate cut in September may alter this trend. Economists have been surprised the U.S. economy has so far avoided recession in the face of interest rate hikes, although it will take time to see how Fed rate cuts affect the economy.

Jobs in Little Rock MSA September 2024

Seasonally adjusted 399,600

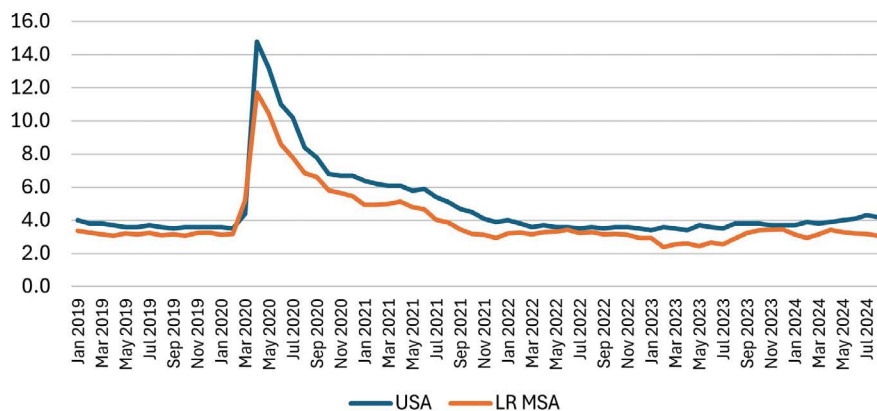
Not seasonally adjusted 400,100

Unemployment Rate Comparison September 2024

| | U.S. | Little Rock MSA |
|-------------------------|------|-----------------|
| Seasonally adjusted | 4.1 | 2.7 |
| Not seasonally adjusted | 3.9 | 2.7 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Local seasonal adjustment to unemployment by Metroplan.

Unemployment Rate January 2019–August 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Figures are seasonally adjusted.



Local growth in warehousing and logistics has boosted the trucking industry in Central Arkansas.

The local unemployment rate has ticked down in recent months, to a seasonally adjusted 2.7 percent in September. This is over a full point below the still-moderate U.S. rate of 4.1. Metroplan's labor force analysis below suggests local labor force participation has returned to a level not seen since about 2012, meaning more people have joined—or rejoined—the workforce.

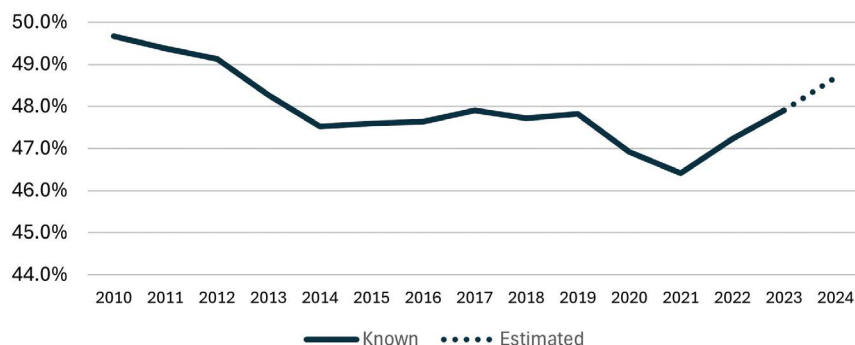
Recent job growth has been spread across multiple industries. As you can see in the chart at bottom, the local region has exceeded U.S. job growth rates in most sectors. The local Business Services sector grew much faster than the U.S. average over the recent 2023–2024 interval.

Growth in the Education and Health and the Mining and Construction sectors also led U.S. and local average

growth. After spectacular growth in the 2021–2022 interval the TWU (Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities) sector grew steadily, outpacing the overall U.S. job growth rate with about 600 new jobs. Warehousing, in particular, has become a regional economic focus.

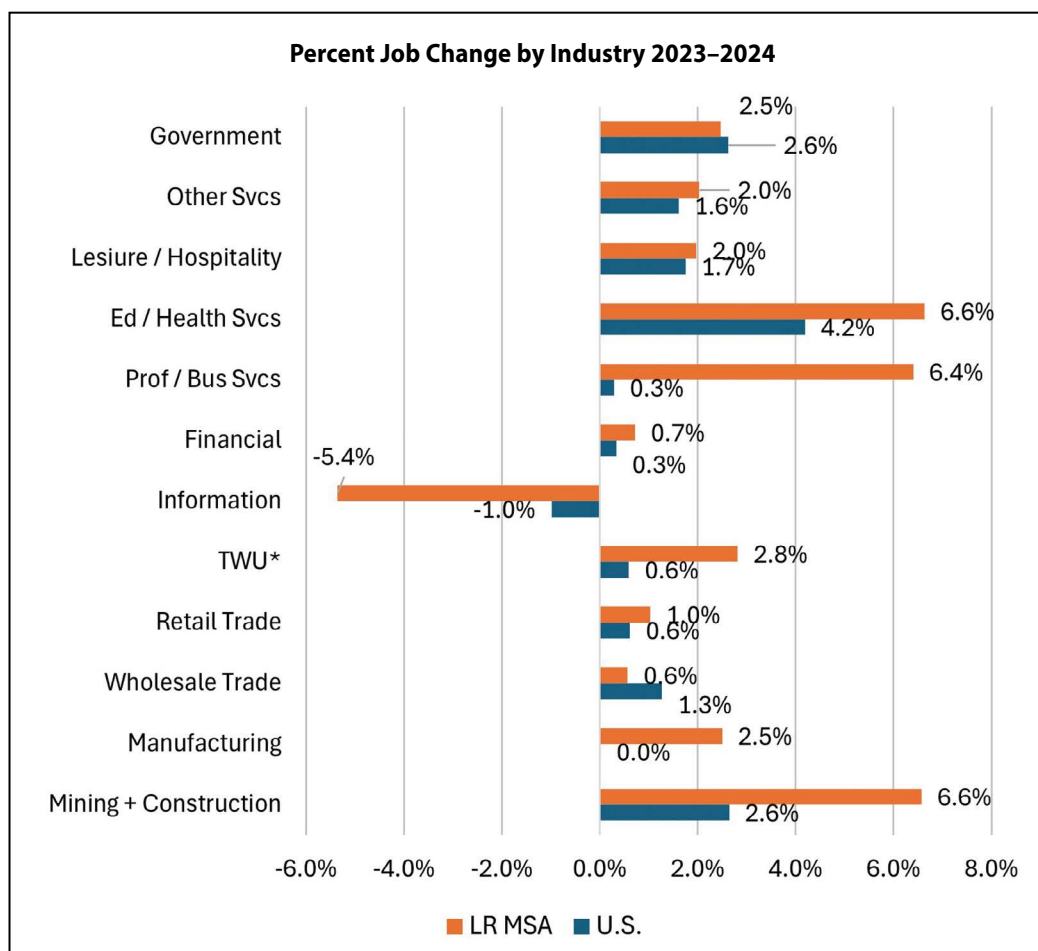
The only sector that performed negatively in Central Arkansas was Information and, since this is now a small portion of the local economy, total job loss was just 300.

Little Rock MSA Labor Force Share of Population 2010–2024



Sources: 1. Decennial Census 2010, 2020. 2. Metroplan population estimates and interpolations. 3. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Percent Job Change by Industry 2023–2024



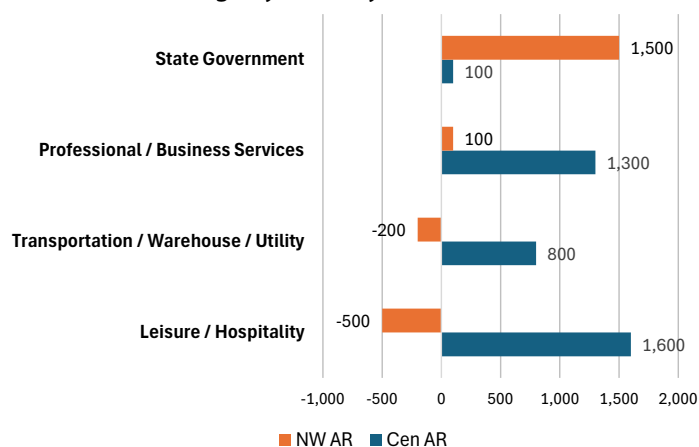
CENTRAL ARKANSAS LEADS IN JOB GROWTH

The chart below depicts September 2024 job change over the previous September. The Little Rock MSA logged job growth 2.2 percent above September 2023. This outpaces the region's previous growth from 2015 to 2019. It was also faster than both the U.S. average (1.5 percent year over year) and the Northwest Arkansas metro area (1.9 percent). It may be a blip. Historically the Northwest Arkansas job trend has been more volatile, with higher highs and some sharp slowdowns, too.

As the chart on the right shows, in the 2023–2024 interval the central region grew jobs faster in private sectors like transportation, warehousing, business services, and leisure/hospitality, while the northwest region only grew faster in state government (probably education).

The jobs data trend since the Covid recession shows less of a growth gap between Northwest and Central Arkansas. The underlying economic growth factors for both regions are shifting, with wages in the Northwest region running 14 percent more, and higher housing costs, too. It may now be cheaper to grow a business in Central Arkansas.

Job Change by Industry Sector 2023–2024*



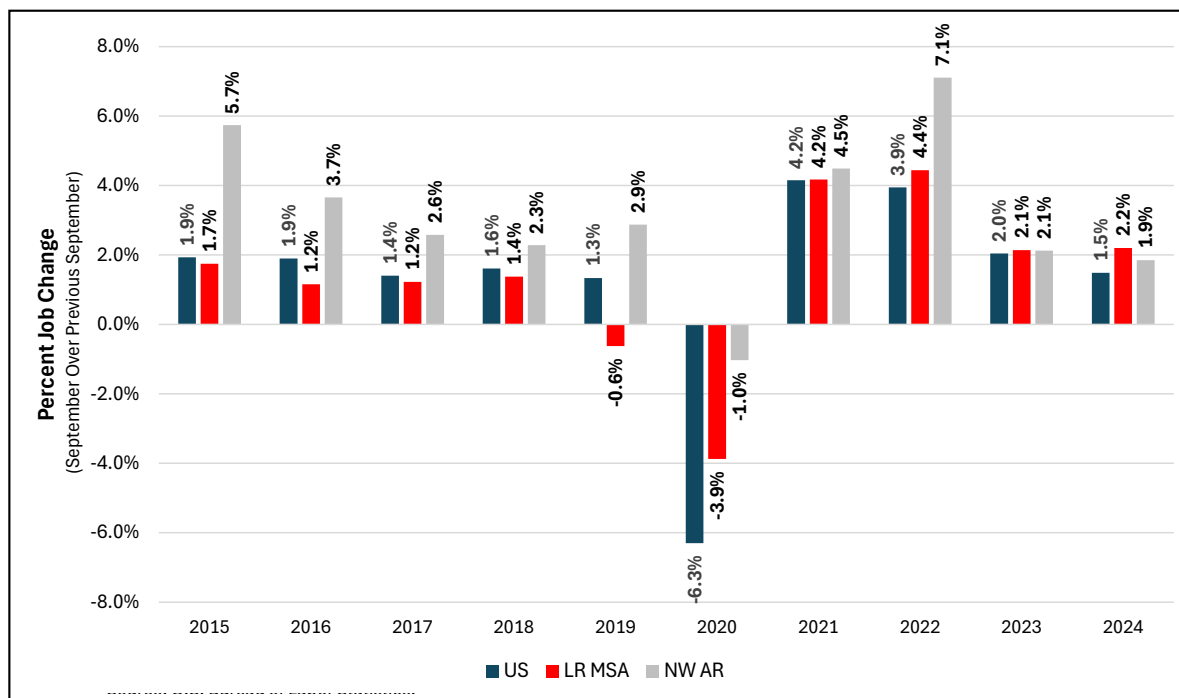
* Period September 2023 to September 2024. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Percent Job Gain 2023–2024*



*Month of September for both years. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Job Change 2015–2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

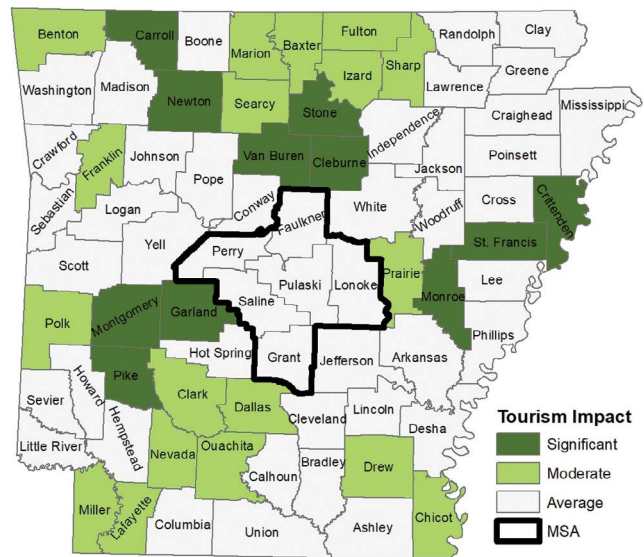
TOURISM AND RECREATION IN CENTRAL ARKANSAS

Whether taking the vacation of a lifetime or just traveling to check in with a family member, almost everybody is a tourist some of the time. In a similar way, tourism affects the economy of almost any community.

Tourism in Arkansas contributed \$9.9 billion to the economy in 2023. Arkansas was a destination for 50.7 million visitors in 2023.¹ The map at right gives a simple indicator of tourism by county in Arkansas.² Those in dark green have a major tourism emphasis, whether because they have major attractions or because they have very small economies in which tourism is a bigger-than-average share. The counties in lighter green have above-average tourism, while those in light gray have an average or below-average emphasis.

According to Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism data, Central Arkansas generates 21 percent of state tourism tax revenue.³ Little Rock's Clinton National Airport handles more commercial flights than any other in the state, playing a key role in the state's travel and tourist activity. The region's central role in the state transportation network means it hosts many travelers while also serving as a tourist destination itself. Some of the locations that attract visitors are described in greater detail in this document. With general economic growth picking up in the region, there are opportunities to be realized in tourism.

Economic Focus on Tourism 2023



The Arkansas Fine Arts Museum was recently extensively rebuilt as part of a highly successful capital campaign which raised \$171 million. Photo credit: LittleRock.com

PGA TOUR'S SIMMONS BANK CHAMPIONSHIP

From October 21-27, 2024, the PGA Tour's Simmons Bank Championship brought national attention to the recently-upgraded Pleasant Valley Country Club in Little Rock. The same event is booked for the next four years, guaranteeing media attention and tourist activity. The Central Arkansas region has a prominent, and growing, role in golf. With mild winters, golfing is possible virtually year-round. Analysis by industry sector shows the region shows a Location Quotient of 1.18 in NAICS 71391, or "Golf courses and country clubs," demonstrating an above-average economic emphasis.



The 2024 golf championship brought 37,000 attendees and a lot of excitement to the Pleasant Valley Country Club in Little Rock. Photo courtesy of the Simmons Bank Championship.

¹Arkansas.com. ²The map is based on each county's share of total state tourism tax revenue in proportion to the county's share in state GDP. Source for tourism tax data: Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. GDP data from U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

³The Central Arkansas region also generated 28.5 percent of state GDP in 2022.

LITTLE ROCK MARATHON AND BIG DAM BRIDGE 100

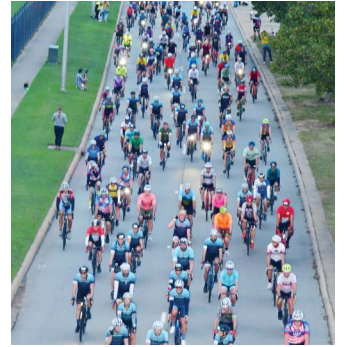
Two important local sporting events, the Little Rock Marathon and the Big Dam Bridge 100, together bring millions of dollars and thousands of visitors into the region. More importantly, they give outsiders exposure to Central Arkansas and provide entertainment and experience for locals too.

In 2024, the Little Rock Marathon hosted 6,205 runners and walkers, brought in 8,205 day attendees, 2,250 overnight attendees and \$2.6 million in business sales.

The Big Dam Bridge 100 bike tour brought in \$870,600 in total business. The race also draws public attention to the region's extensive and expanding network of bike trails, including the Big Dam Bridge, the world's longest purpose-built pedestrian bridge.



The Little Rock Marathon brings thousands of visitors to the city. Photo courtesy of the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Over 3,000 cyclists from 35 different states, 5 countries, and all corners of the state gathered in Little Rock for the Big Dam Bridge 100 bike tour.

ARKANSAS GAME AND FISH FOUNDATION SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX AND WITT STEPHENS, JR. CLUBHOUSE—JACKSONVILLE



Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation Shooting Sports Complex.

The City of Jacksonville has done a lot in recent years to raise its sports and recreation profile. One of its most popular attractions is the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation Shooting Sports Complex, which was developed through a partnership between the city and the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation. The largest complex in the state of its type, it hosts multiple state championships and regional tournaments for archery and shooting disciplines, bringing thousands of visitors to the regional annually. The center includes a learning center for those interested in the sport.

BENTON MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

Benton opened its Mountain Bike Park on June 14, 2024, a state-of-the-art facility with trails for beginners, intermediate bikers, and—of course—some suitable to hard-core veteran mountain bikers. World Champion Anneke Beerten joined the Grand Opening, emphasizing the significance of the new facility for Central Arkansas. Adjacent to the Southwest Trail, the Bike Park will be an added asset for regional bike tourism and outdoor recreation. To top it all off, the bike park has a walk/bike trail at its perimeter and provides access to the scenic Saline River for boating and fishing. Loved by both residents and visitors, the park will continue to add to the quality of life and economy of Saline County and Central Arkansas.



Since the Bike Park opened on June 14th, it has attracted thousands of visitors from all over Arkansas and 9 additional states. Photo: Benton Facebook.

DOWN ON THE RIVER

A few years ago, Sam Ellis used his life savings to buy three kayaks and start a rental business. The gamble paid off and today Sam runs a successful small business—Rock Town River Outfitters—with three locations renting an assortment of kayaks, bikes and mountain bikes. Many of his customers come from out of town, including business visitors with one free day after a conference or training session to “do Little Rock.” His business has served visitors from most of the fifty states and plenty from abroad. A biking visitor can pedal the Arkansas River Trail to view an active downtown scene and a variety of scenic parks. A kayak can paddle from the Rock City Yacht Club to downtown in five minutes, faster than you can drive it.



Samuel Ellis and Grizzly Bear.



Rock Town River Outfitters offers kayak rentals & tours and pontoon boat tours on the Arkansas River, as well as bike rentals and tours in Little Rock. Photos courtesy of Rock Town River Outfitters.



The river, Sam contends, is over-feared and under-appreciated. Ten months out of the year the David D. Terry Lake in front of downtown is placid and safe, thanks to the McClellan-Kerr Navigation System of dams that tames the water. He pilots a pontoon boat for visitors on the lake, where you can take in the skyline and lights, then quickly reach some remarkably pristine parkland just upstream. It is hard to believe you are near the core of an urban region of 771,000 residents. Down on the river the pace of life slows while the sparkling sunlight

and glimmering water reflect a beauty too often overlooked. The river, Sam believes, remains under-utilized and loaded with potential.

GO KARTING IN VILONIA

Vilonia hosts one of the newest regional attractions. The Central Arkansas Karting Complex currently has about 22,000 people registered in their system, averaging 2,000 new customers per month, some from neighboring states like Tennessee and Texas. Most visitors are from Arkansas, including many regulars from Northwest Arkansas. “It wasn’t something you’d expect—the fastest Go Kart track in Arkansas,” Vilonia Mayor Preston Scroggins told us, “We were excited to work with them. It was a great experience.”



Photos courtesy of the Karting Complex.

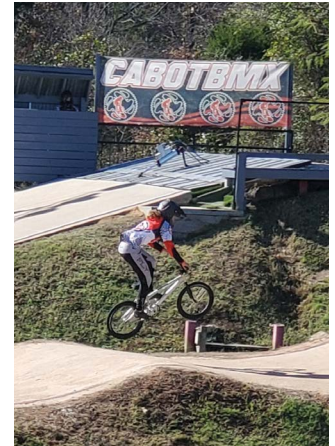
CABOT DOES SPORTS IN A BIG WAY

The city of Cabot has become a regional center for sports activity. Teams from all over Arkansas and from other states hold sporting events in Cabot. The city's advanced facilities make it a favored year-round location for sports, including volleyball, pickleball, softball, basketball, mountain biking and other activities. This brings visitors, and the business helped Cabot to recruit a Hampton Inn and a Holiday Inn Express, with another higher-end hotel presently considering the city.

It began when Cabot asked residents to choose a focus for economic and community development. The town of Cape Girardeau, Missouri served as a catalyst example. Thanks to open communication through numerous public meetings and engagement activities, Cabot passed multiple bond issues by comfortable voting margins. Today, Cabot hosts Game Time at the Grounds, a 128,000-square foot sports facility. Near the same site is Cabot BMX for adventuresome bikers, and trails for mountain biking, walking and biking are in the works. Cabot residents decided sports activity is a natural fit, and local leaders acted upon their wishes.



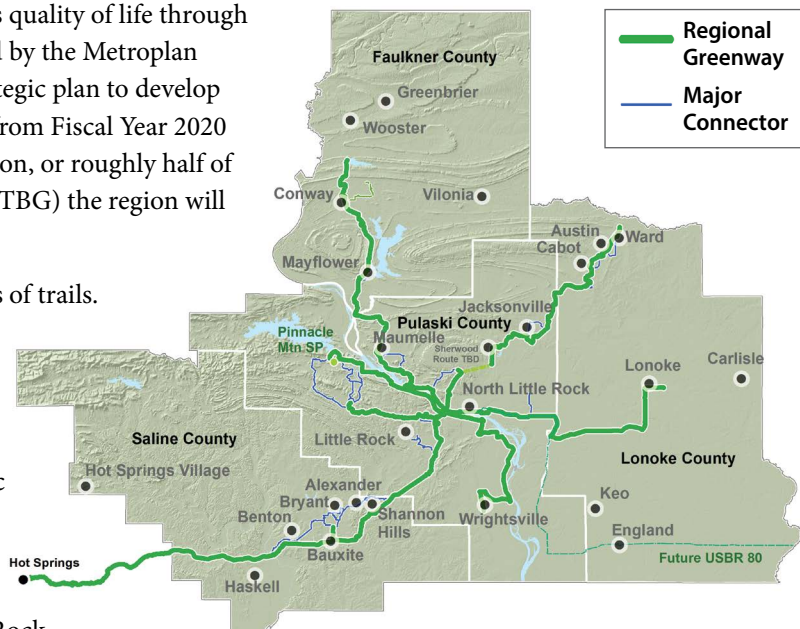
Cabot's Game Time at the Grounds is a great place for volleyball, basketball, and many other sports. Nearby Cabot BMX challenges bikers. Plans are in the works for mountain bike trails, walking/jogging trails, a skate park and pump track.



THE CENTRAL ARKANSAS REGIONAL GREENWAYS CONNECTION

Metroplan is engaged with developing the region's quality of life through the Central Arkansas Regional Greenways, passed by the Metroplan Board in early 2020. Regional Greenways is a strategic plan to develop a regional multi-use path network, with funding from Fiscal Year 2020 through Fiscal Year 2030. It is a target of \$55 million, or roughly half of the federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) the region will receive over that period.

When complete, the system will include 222 miles of trails. As the map shows, it will connect most Metroplan member cities, from Benton and Shannon Hills in the southwest to Cabot and Ward in the northeast, for example. City governments are looking forward to the economic multipliers they expect from connecting trail segments. Construction has already begun on the Southwest Trail, a 65-mile portion of the Regional Greenway that will connect from Little Rock Central National Historic Site to Hot Springs National Park.



Many of Metroplan's member cities are already planning trailheads or major connectors to the Greenway. NOTE: Trail Alignments were established based on input from local jurisdictions. Minor revisions to alignments may occur during the project design phase.

CONNECTING CONWAY

The map below conveys the Connect Conway Project, a 15.2-mile network of trails from west of the University of Central Arkansas campus, past downtown and across I-40 into northeastern Conway. The trail will tie together activity centers including the Conway Commons shopping center, the Don Owens Sports Complex, and several schools. The trail will connect into disadvantaged neighborhoods while linking the existing Stone Dam Creek and Kinley Trails. Funded with help from a federal RAISE grant, Connect Conway promises to enhance mobility and livability in this growing city of over 68,000 people.



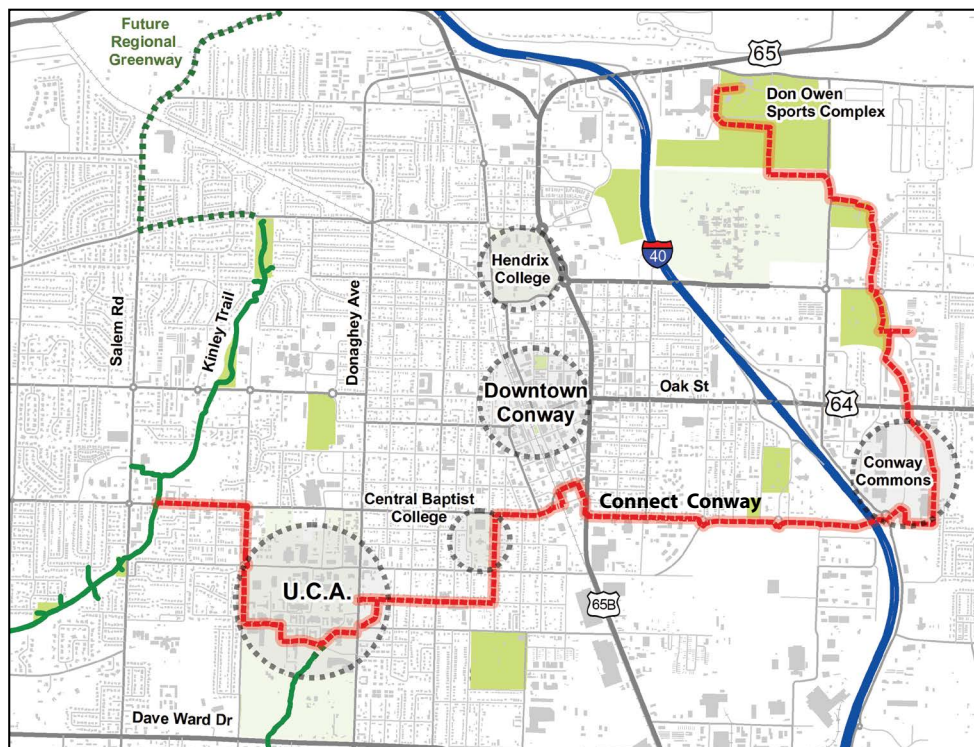
A plaza and trailhead are planned along the Little Creek corridor portion of the route. It will serve as a demonstration project for sustainable streamside use and waterway restoration. Conceptual drawing from RAISE Project Narrative.



The former Conway Airport site offers several hundred acres of accessible, centrally located undeveloped land and will host a segment of the Connect Conway trail.

Conway's award of a \$24.6 million RAISE grant will connect:

- 10 parks
- 7 schools
- 3 major retail areas
- 3 universities
- 14 major employment centers
- 16 neighborhoods



Connect Conway route map by Metroplan. Source: https://media.conwayarkansas.gov/conwayarkansas-media/documents/Connect_Conway_-_2022_RAISE_Project_Narrative.pdf

CONSTRUCTION VALUE

Total construction in Central Arkansas exceeded \$1.5 billion in 2023. High interest rates put a damper on residential activity, but commercial and institutional construction accelerated. As the chart shows, most of the total investment (55 percent, or \$848 million) was in non-residential construction, suggesting a strengthening regional investment trend. Overall construction value exceeded all recent years, exceeding a previous high in 2018 even after inflation adjustment.

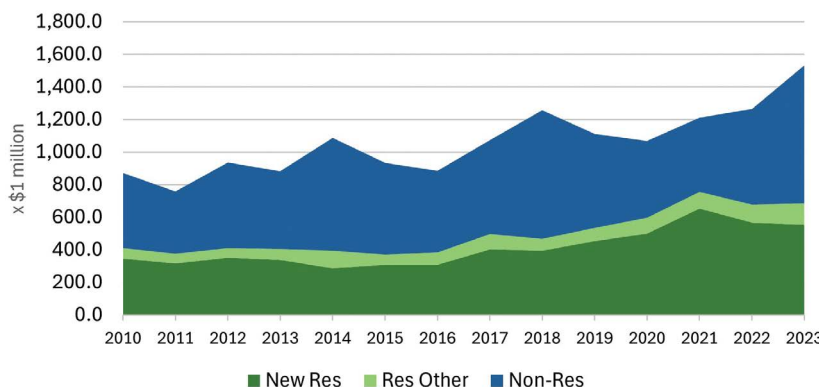


\$230,000 was about seven percent lower than the 2022 value of \$247,000. Within the region, new home values varied by city. Benton claimed its first-ever place as the highest-valued market, at \$310,000. Maumelle has often topped these charts but was remarkably affordable at \$184,700, with a large share of townhomes. The most affordable cities for new homes were Jacksonville and North Little Rock, at \$122,500 and \$138,800, respectively.

The average stated value for new homes declined in 2023, after several consecutive years of rising. The 2023 value of about

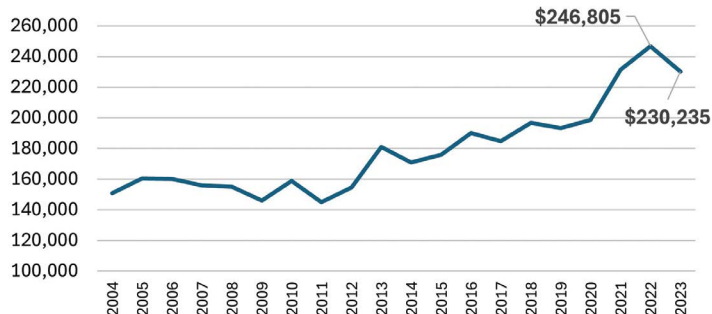
Remember that most building permits represent a value stated by the applicant. With single-family homes, they understate the eventual sales price by as much as half.

Central Arkansas Construction Value by Type 2010–2023

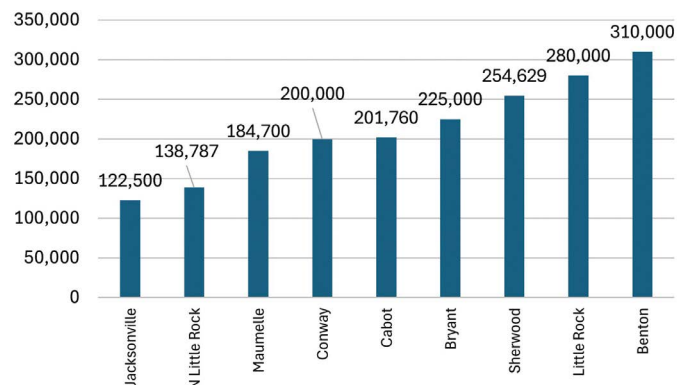


The Greens at Longhills apartment complex in Benton continues adding units.

Central Arkansas Median Permitted Value of New Single-Family Homes



Median State New House Permit Value 2023



HOUSING GROWTH HOLDS EVEN IN CENTRAL ARKANSAS

Housing construction has held about even in recent quarters, ticking up in multi-family and holding steady in single-family. This solid performance in face of high interest rates probably reflects the lower interest rates lenders have been offering in anticipation of Federal Reserve easing, which in fact happened during September 2024 with a half-point cut.

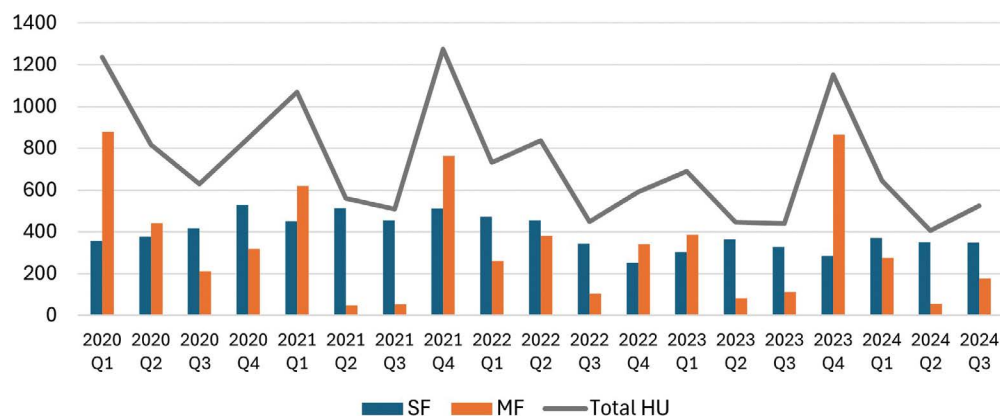
The chart at the top of the facing page depicts the relationship between the Prime Rate and Central Arkansas single-family housing construction. As you can see, when rates dipped in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, housing construction rose. When rates climbed in early 2022, construction receded. The rate drop so far, though hailed as a major step, remains 7.75 percent, well above the 4.75 percent rate prior to the covid recession. Housing may rebound somewhat, but do not expect a construction boom in the immediate future.



**Little Rock MSA Quarterly Housing Units by Type
2020–2024**

| | SINGLE-FAMILY | MULTIFAMILY | TOTAL HOUSING UNITS |
|---------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 2020 Q1 | 357 | 880 | 1237 |
| 2020 Q2 | 377 | 441 | 818 |
| 2020 Q3 | 418 | 211 | 629 |
| 2020 Q4 | 529 | 319 | 848 |
| 2021 Q1 | 450 | 620 | 1070 |
| 2021 Q2 | 513 | 48 | 561 |
| 2021 Q3 | 455 | 54 | 509 |
| 2021 Q4 | 510 | 764 | 1274 |
| 2022 Q1 | 473 | 260 | 733 |
| 2022 Q2 | 455 | 382 | 837 |
| 2022 Q3 | 344 | 104 | 448 |
| 2022 Q4 | 251 | 341 | 592 |
| 2023 Q1 | 304 | 385 | 689 |
| 2023 Q2 | 363 | 83 | 446 |
| 2023 Q3 | 329 | 111 | 440 |
| 2023 Q4 | 286 | 865 | 1151 |
| 2024 Q1 | 371 | 275 | 646 |
| 2024 Q2 | 351 | 55 | 406 |
| 2024 Q3 | 348 | 176 | 524 |

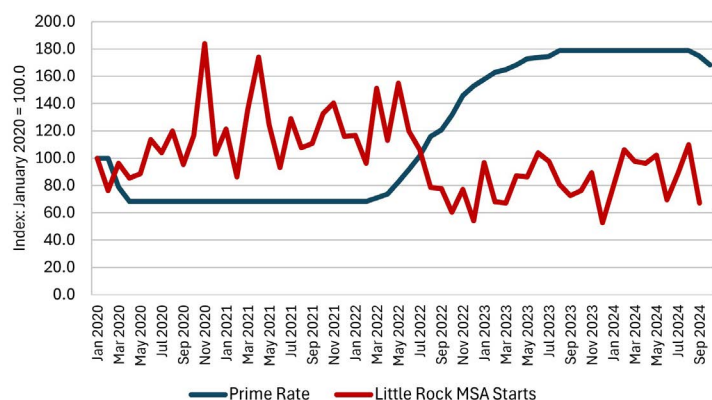
Little Rock MSA Quarterly New Housing Unit Permits 2020–2024



Source: Metroplan records, courtesy of member cities.

Prime Rate and Single-family Starts

January 2020–September 2024

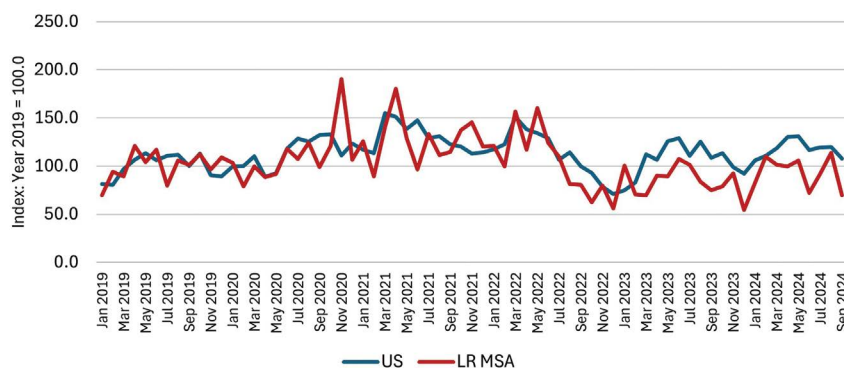


Sources: 1. U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. 3. Metroplan housing records.

The table at bottom left shows year-over-year single-family housing permits. Little Rock granted permits to 339 new single-family homes in the most recent year-to-year interval: October 2023 through September 2024. Benton ranked second with 223, and North Little Rock ticked up with 175, about 55 percent higher than the previous year. All other cities saw net gains except Conway and Sherwood.

The table at bottom right depicts year-over-year multi-family permits. Conway led the pack in multi-family with 668 units, followed closely by Little Rock with 538. Benton also saw 180 units added to an existing complex. A handful of duplexes and small complexes in Jacksonville, North Little Rock and Bryant rounded out the year's multi-family construction.

Single-family New Unit Trend January 2019–September 2024



These new duplexes in south Benton offer a dose of affordability in the city's increasingly upscale market for new housing.

Sources: 1. U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2. Metroplan housing permit records.

Total Units Permitted Over Previous Year-to-Date

| | OCT 22 – SEPT 23 | OCT 23 – SEPT 24 |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Single-family | 1,247 | 1,370 |
| Multifamily | 920 | 1,431 |
| Total Units | 2,167 | 2,801 |

Single-family Housing Units Permitted Over Previous Year-to-Date

| CITY | OCT '22 – SEPT '23 | OCT '23 – SEPT '24 | PERCENT CHANGE |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Benton | 139 | 223 | 60.4% |
| Bryant | 90 | 139 | 54.4% |
| Cabot | 61 | 97 | 59.0% |
| Conway | 201 | 129 | -35.8% |
| Jacksonville | 79 | 80 | 1.3% |
| Little Rock | 338 | 339 | 0.3% |
| Maumelle | 98 | 89 | -9.2% |
| N Little Rock | 113 | 175 | 54.9% |
| Sherwood | 128 | 99 | -22.7% |
| Vilonia | 20 | 75 | 275.0% |

Multifamily Housing Units Permitted Over Previous Year-to-Date

| CITY | OCT '22 – SEPT '23 | OCT '23 – SEPT '24 |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Benton | 0 | 180 |
| Bryant | 6 | 2 |
| Cabot | 136 | 0 |
| Conway | 61 | 668 |
| Jacksonville | 16 | 24 |
| Little Rock | 31 | 538 |
| Maumelle | 2 | 0 |
| N Little Rock | 668 | 19 |
| Sherwood | 0 | 0 |
| Vilonia | 6 | 0 |

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

This edition of the *Metrotrends* newsletter has emphasized tourism, sporting, and public entertainment. These activities are critical components of regional economic health, because they closely correlate with local quality of life, which is a determining factor in business and residential location decisions.

Previous pages show examples where the region is excelling, such as the Little Rock Marathon, the Big Dam Bridge 100, the Regional Greenways initiative, and Cabot's success in attracting statewide and even national sporting events. Cabot's example in particular provides a recipe for economic progress.

A successful regional project begins with sincere public engagement. Leadership of this sort is an act of listening, reflecting, and then envisaging future action, constantly re-engaging with the public via communication and even voting support. It helps when public and private leaders work closely together for common benefit.

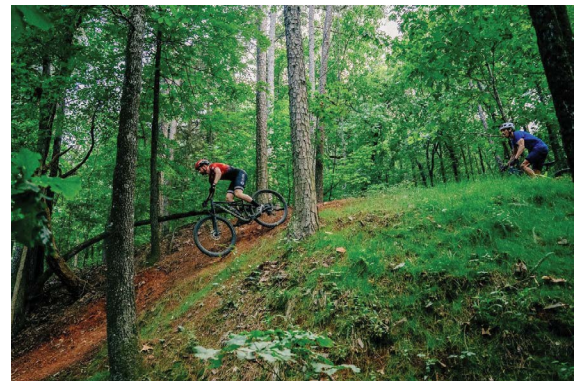
The Central Arkansas region is endowed with strong transportation assets due to central location within the state and its highway and air connections. It also benefits from an unusually varied and attractive natural landscape, within which the Arkansas River is a crucial and under-appreciated feature. Developments which harness regional assets to favor tourism and recreation will also promote economic prosperity.



Little Rock's Central High National Historic Site is a major tourist draw with 92,100 visitors in 2022 who spent \$6.1 million that year.



Little Rock is a golfing city, as demonstrated by the 2024 PGA Tour's Simmons Bank Championship. In its inaugural season, the Simmons Bank Championship presented by Stephens received the 2024 Players Award, with PGA TOUR Champions players voting this tournament as their favorite event. Photo courtesy of the Simmons Bank Championship.



Mountain biking at Pinnacle Mountain State Park. Photo credit: Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau.

STATISTICAL SUPPLEMENT

METROPOLITAN WAGE TRENDS

The chart at right compares the average weekly wage trend for the Central and Northwest Arkansas regions. Central Arkansas used to have the highest wages in the state, but by 2023 wages in Northwest Arkansas ran about 14 percent higher.

INFORMATION SECURITY ANALYSTS IN 2023

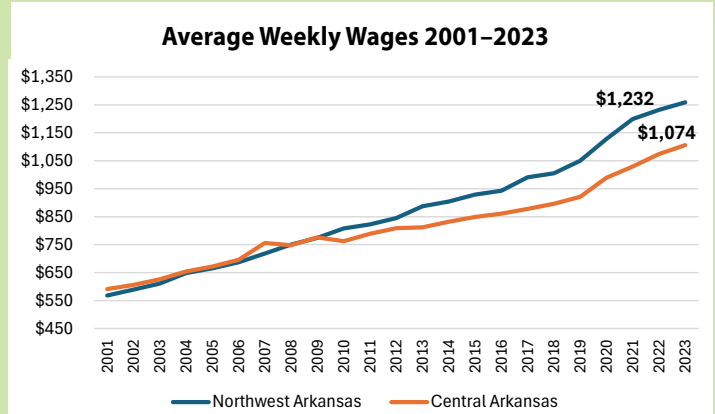
Cyber security is not really an industry, but rather a job specialty found in industries like national security, corporate management, finance and business services. The latest release from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the Little Rock metro area continues to rank above average in Information Security Analyst jobs. While the local Location Quotient (LQ) looks modest at 0.93, this is 66th place among 393 U.S. metro areas and non-metro areas included in the analysis, or about the top one-sixth. The region's sizeable finance and fintech industries probably host most of these local cyber-security jobs.

The state of Arkansas ranks 28th among the states for its share of Information Security Analysts with an LQ of 0.78. Data for other Arkansas metro areas was not provided in the 2023 analysis.

Information Security Analysts Little Rock MSA and State of Arkansas 2023

| Geography | Jobs | LQ Rank* | Location Quotient |
|-----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Little Rock MSA | 370 | 66 | 0.93 |
| State of AR | 1,140 | 28 | 0.78 |

* For Little Rock MSA, rank is among 293 U.S. metro and non-metro areas in BLS analysis; for State of AR, rank is among 50 U.S. states plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW data set.

OTHER SERVICES

The two-digit NAICS category 81 “Other Services” does not sound exciting, but accounts for a larger-than-average share of jobs in the Little Rock MSA. The analysis below shows subsectors within Other Services with a higher-than-average location quotient. Automotive maintenance and repair subsectors rank prominently, possibly reflecting regional centrality within the state but representing a productive local economic specialty as well.

The region's role as the state capital, as well as its economic centrality, probably helps explain its role in the nonprofit sector, shown here in categories like “Professional organizations,” “Other social advocacy organizations,” and “Business associations.”

Little Rock MSA Subcategories Under NAICS 81 "Other Services"

| Location Quotient | NAICS Industry | Jobs |
|-------------------|---|---------------|
| 2.74 | NAICS 811191 Automotive oil change and lubrication shops | 457 |
| 2.42 | NAICS 811198 All other automotive repair and maintenance | 167 |
| 2.07 | NAICS 812111 Barber shops | 158 |
| 1.98 | NAICS 811114 Specialized automotive repair | 200 |
| 1.83 | NAICS 81392 Professional organizations | 378 |
| 1.71 | NAICS 811412 Appliance repair and maintenance | 93 |
| 1.58 | NAICS 81141 Home and garden equipment and appliance rpr. and maint. | 102 |
| 1.51 | NAICS 81119 Other automotive repair and maintenance | 994 |
| 1.51 | NAICS 813319 Other social advocacy organizations | 457 |
| 1.41 | NAICS 81391 Business associations | 373 |
| | Subtotal | 3,379 |
| | Other NAICS 81 | 16,321 |
| 1.33 | Overall NAICS 81 | 19,700 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, QCEW data set 1st Qtr 2024.

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