

# SEEDS OF GROWTH

A Newsletter from the Crossett  
Economic Development Foundation

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## From the Director's Desk

An Update from Mike Smith

Economic development is a broad topic that leaves many confused by what we do. Does economic development mean recruiting new industry to town? Does it mean working with the existing businesses in town to keep them? Does it include making Crossett an attractive place to live? Is it building relationships with neighboring communities and states? The answer to all these (and more) is YES!

Because we wear so many different hats from one day to the next, sometimes people question what exactly we do. The simple answer is the Crossett Economic Development Foundation staff work every day to make Crossett a better place to live and work. We cannot do this alone. We have amazing support throughout our community and our state. We thank everyone who so willingly assists in our efforts.

Cherub and I have been working in this capacity for nearly 20 years and in this time, we have seen projects fail for many reasons, but I can honestly say that failure has never been due to a lack of trying on our part. We have seen projects end because of supply problems, another state offering better incentives, and the company's financial downfalls. Prospects visit and we may work with them for years only to be passed over for some other community. Grant applications are submitted that would have great impact on our community, yet the agency chooses not to fund the project. That's what economic development is. It's taking the chance that you might get a yes, while knowing the odds are against you. However, it's that chance that makes the successes even more remarkable when they do occur.

This past year has been a struggle and a challenge for all of us, but this community has survived. We have seen some success stories. Most importantly, we have banded together as a community and helped each other. I'm sure we still have more struggles ahead but if we support each other and remember that the people are what make Crossett the wonderful place that we have all chosen to live, our future is bright. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2021!

Working for our future,



# Cynergy Cargo Trailers Open for Business

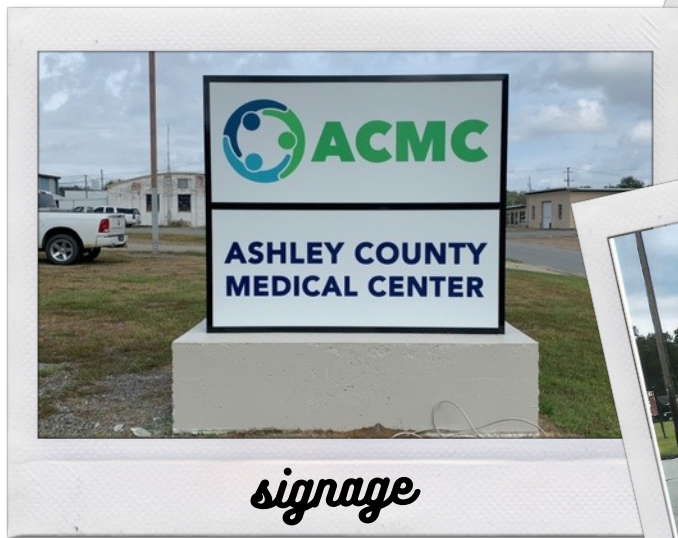
Cynergy Cargo Trailers rolled out their first trailer at their new Crossett facility in September at their grand opening. The final screw to the first trailer was ceremoniously placed by Governor Asa Hutchison. Cynergy then presented the trailer to the City of Crossett as a gift to their new home. Many area business leaders were in attendance to welcome Cynergy Cargo Trailers to Crossett and wish them well on their endeavors.

Cynergy Cargo currently employs 35 people at their Crossett location and is still hiring. The move to Crossett allowed the company to expand their dealer partnerships in this area.





Looking to spruce up around your business in 2021 but need a little help...A Revamp Crossett grant may be your answer.



Ashley County Medical Center  
and Minit Shop Oakhurst



# Better Broadband Just Around the Corner

Streaming tv, working from home, cloud-based storage for small businesses, virtual school, credit card payment processing, telemedicine...so many aspects of our world are dependent on quality, reliable internet which has been a recurring problem for many residents and businesses alike over the past several years. Recently, the City of Crossett was awarded a \$2 million grant from Arkansas Rural Connect that will result in improved broadband service availability for the entire town.

This problem didn't arise overnight. In fact, over the past several years, the City, Crossett Economic Development Foundation and Crossett Area Chamber of Commerce have worked closely to gather information from local customers and held several public meetings to gather complaints. These organizations have spent countless hours on the phones with local internet service providers and state agencies trying to develop solutions to this problem. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the need for better broadband service for commercial and residential customers in rural communities was highlighted by the increase in virtual school, telemedicine and telework. This led to increased funding opportunities to find help solve the problem for rural communities, like Crossett.

The grant program required that a community work with an internet service provider to develop a plan for improvement. The City of Crossett submitted two applications, one with each of our local internet service providers. The awarded application was the partnership with Swyft Connect. Construction on the project is expected to be complete by the end of this month. Most of the fiber has been run and the splicing team is expected to begin their work soon. Majority of the new lines are aerial throughout town with a small portion being underground. The total project cost for this broadband upgrade is just over \$2.5 million. The difference in project cost over grant funds was an investment into the project by Swyft Connect.

Swyft Connect anticipates service will be available to customers in early 2021. All speeds will be available to all residents and businesses within Crossett city limits.





# Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund Helps Local Causes



Weyerhaeuser recently awarded grants to two community organizations. The City of Crossett was awarded \$3,000 for a car wrap for the D.A.R.E. car to help raise awareness to the anti-drug, anti-violence partnership between the Crossett Police Department and Crossett School District.

Carousel Day Service was awarded \$3,500 to help fund facility improvements that will make students safer during a healthcare crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Community Partner Spotlight

## Crossett Municipal Airport

Most people in Crossett know that there is an airport between Crossett and Hamburg, but have you ever thought about how unique this is or how important this asset is to Crossett's success. The Crossett Economic Development Foundation is proud we have this community partner.

The Crossett Municipal Airport, or Z. M. Jack Stell Field, is a city-owned general aviation airport in Southeast Arkansas, located 5 miles northeast of Crossett's central business district and occupying 126 acres. The airport is served by one asphalt-surfaced, 5,009 x 75 ft. runway. The runway is not served by a parallel taxiway, but a stub taxiway connects the southwest end of the runway with the apron area. The runway has medium intensity lights for nighttime use, a rotating beacon and visual approach slope indicator lights at both ends. Runway 23 is served by a non-precision GPS instrument approach. Traffic in and out of the airport consists of general aviation, med-evac traffic, and Arkansas State Forestry fire bombers. A number of corporate operators also utilize the airport, with many of them using small corporate jets. The airport employs one part-time airport manager, and operations are overseen by the Crossett Airport Commission.

The city operates the fixed base operation and provides both 100LL and Jet A self-serve fuel. Aircraft storage is provided by both conventional and T-hangars privately owned by local aircraft owners. However, the City owns two large hangars, with rental space available in one of them. General aviation operations include agricultural application activity and small corporate jet activity.

The airport has made several improvements over the past few years. In September, the new fuel system was completed and operational. The self-service processor accepts payment via Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Multiservice Aviation. The most recent improvement project is currently underway. The Federal Airport Administration awarded the City a \$272,000 grant to replace the runway & taxiway lighting system with new energy efficient LED lights.



Because of this valuable asset in our community and assistance from the local pilot community, the Crossett Economic Development Foundation has been able to showcase our town to many people over the years who may have otherwise never visited. The ability to fly in the owners of Atwoods early one morning, show them an available building, spend lunch together working through the numbers and fly them back home for an evening meeting resulted in a successful recruitment for not only Crossett but also for many of our neighbors by bringing the chain to Arkansas.





The Crossett Economic Development Foundation was proud to partner with the City of Crossett and the Parks & Recreation Commission to assist with the design and purchase of the new sign at the Scott McCormick Sports Complex.

## CONGRATULATIONS, HOWARD AND PHIL!

We are proud to have you both as part of our Board of Directors and our community.



ARKANSAS  
**250**  
ARKANSAS' MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS  
2020

WHAT ELSE DID YOU GET FOR CHRISTMAS, SON?



I KNOW YOU'RE PROUD OF IT ABEL, BUT DON'T YOU THINK YOU ARE CARRYING IT A LITTLE TOO FAR?



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

