

SEEDS OF GROWTH

A Newsletter from the Crossett
Economic Development Foundation

Celebrating Cultural Milestones

The 75th Annual Crossett Rodeo

May 31st – June 3rd the Crossett Riding Club held its 75th annual Rodeo at the Cap Gates Arena. This beloved celebration of Crossett's enthusiasm for equestrian sports is always a huge hit. This year it was projected that spectators traveled to Crossett from the surrounding 10 counties for a total of 15,000 guests. The boost this event has on our local economy cannot be overstated. Local restaurants and hotels were busier than ever while local shops experienced a significant boost in foot traffic. Moving the rodeo to May seems to have had the desired effect as top athletes in the sport made the Crossett event spectacular, and the weather cooperated for most of the week.



Sanders Signs SB549 and HB1045

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — On Monday, April 10, 2023, the Governor signed into law:

SB549, to reduce the income tax rates applicable to individuals, trusts, estates, and corporations, and HB1045, to enhance economic competitiveness by phasing out the throwback rule.



Repealing the Throwback rule!

The Crossett Economic Development Foundation extends many thanks to Representative Howard Beaty and Senator Ben Gilmore for all their hard work to repeal the throwback rule. This rule has been a deterrent for many entrepreneurs and business owners looking to expand or relocate to Arkansas. Phasing out this rule will not only have a positive impact on economic growth in Crossett but will benefit communities across the state. "This antiquated rule hurt exiting manufacturing and hindered our state's ability to recruit new manufacturing by making our state less competitive with surrounding states that had eliminated this rule years ago," said Beaty.

Arkansas was one of 22 states with this rule before the repeal. The rule is an obscure tax policy that requires multi-state corporations based in Arkansas to report income from other states where revenue from product sales are not taxable, thus "throwing back" the tax liability to Arkansas. "We had ran into this hindrance here in Crossett but had not been able to get our legislators to make the change needed in the past. This is the importance of having two aggressive legislators like Senator Gilmore and Representative Beaty, both being from Crossett," said Mike Smith, Executive Director.

Preserving Local Treasures

We are thrilled to announce that the Crossett Municipal Auditorium has been selected to receive grant funding from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program! These funds, allocated by the Arkansas Department of Heritage, will be utilized for the initial phase of replacing the HVAC system.



The auditorium, which was constructed in the late 1950s, continues to rely on its original HVAC system for temperature and moisture control. Over the years, the caretakers have done an exceptional job of maintaining the system. However, after more than 60 years of use, the system has surpassed its expected lifespan. Extensive construction will be necessary to accommodate a modern HVAC system, primarily focused on the basement area.

Moisture, if left unaddressed, can lead to rapid deterioration of the building. The current HVAC system is barely functioning, and without this opportunity to address the issue, the auditorium would have been at risk of being lost. This would have left local performers and cultural groups without a space to share the joy of their craft. The grant funding marks the first step in a long-term effort to preserve this cherished local treasure.

The Crossett Municipal Auditorium was constructed in 1954 and generously donated to the city by the Crossett Lumbar Company as an expression of gratitude for the

community's significant support. For several decades, it served as the sole venue in town for local performers and school functions. In 2007, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places following its hosting of the Miss Rodeo Arkansas Pageant. Presently, the auditorium continues to be utilized for dance recitals, theatrical performances, and community-wide movie nights.



**ARKANSAS HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

Honoring Linda Rushing



Earlier this year, Linda Rushing, the Vice Chancellor at UAM-CTC announced her upcoming retirement. Rushing has been a much-loved administrator at the college for 48 years. She started in 1975 as a Business Instructor and held a variety of positions before becoming the campus' lead administrator for the last 36 years. "I can genuinely say that I have enjoyed each one of the positions in which I served, and I have been incredibly blessed to have a career that I have truly loved," Rushing said. When the technical institute joined the University of Arkansas System in 2003, Linda became the Vice Chancellor and has held the position ever since. She is the last remaining original staff member on campus.

Throughout her time with the school, Rushing was so much more than an employee. She loves the students and faculty like family and does the best she can to make UAM-CTC the launchpad for so many promising careers. "Linda has always done an exceptional job of monitoring local and regional industry trends and adapting curriculums in a way that best prepares students to enter the workforce," says Lynn Rodgers, chairman of the UAM-CTC Advisory Board.

Rushing is someone who believes in a hands-on approach and leads by example. In an effort to make sure she could truly understand and empathize with students, Rushing has taken

some of the courses offered by the college such as welding and small engines.

Rushing has seen the school through many hardships. "Linda has always been there when the school needed her and found a way to make the best out of any situation." Rodgers said. When the school was destroyed by a tornado in 1988, Rushing didn't skip a beat. Classes were relocated throughout town and within four days classes were up and running and the year was completed with record attendance. No time was wasted in rebuilding the school better than before.

Over the years, Rushing has made her mark on the school and the wider community. She has served on a variety of boards, locally and regionally, including our Board of Directors where she has served as secretary for 10 years. As a rotary member, Rushing believes in the motto "service above self" and has always been willing to volunteer when there's a need.

Although Rushing will certainly be missed by everyone at UAM-CTC, we are excited to celebrate this milestone alongside her. In retirement, Rushing is most looking forward to time with her grandchildren, the opportunity to travel, and time to devote to the Lord's service and her small ranch. Rushing's last official day at UAM-CTC will be June 30th.

Big Move at the Port

The Crossett Economic Development Foundation and the Crossett Port Authority have worked alongside Barnhart Crane to move a 130,000-pound, wood-drying kiln through the Crossett Port. We are excited to have had the opportunity to be a part of this transaction and understand that this boost in commercial activity on the Ouachita River shows the viability and the value this river system has to the valley. To prepare for this project, geotechnical studies were conducted to ensure the grounds could support the immense weight of this equipment. Soundings were also taken through the river and up the turning basin at the port to determine the depth of the water.

Once the river portion of this transportation route was cleared, permits were secured from the Arkansas Department of Transportation to ensure that the Kiln could safely be transported along state highways to its destination.

Crossett was honored to have been recommended by the Department of Transportation when approached by this manufacturer looking for the most efficient and economical route to transport this piece of machinery. "Our entire team works closely with our state agencies, local officials and industry to make projects like this successful for everyone," said Mayor Marshall.

In order to protect the infrastructure of the port, timber was laid across the loading ramp to act as a cushion. This piece of equipment is so large that it could not be loaded onto any transport vehicle and a truck needed to be built around it before it could travel by land.

"We are always proud when our local infrastructure is used and demonstrates the utility and value of what we have in South Arkansas," said Executive Director Mike Smith.

The kiln was purchased from Italy and traveled across the Atlantic, through the Gulf of Mexico, and up the Ouachita from New Orleans. The journey took more than 30 days for the equipment to make it to its destination in Gurdon, Arkansas.





2023 has been a busy year so far for the Ashley County Medical Center. Ashley County is served by one of the few remaining locally owned and operated hospitals in southeast Arkansas. The security of knowing that quality care is close to home is a blessing like no other. We wanted to take a minute to highlight it's success!



Modern Critical Care in Ashley County

Our foundation would like to highlight the latest development at the Ashley County Medical Center, the grand opening of the new Critical Care Unit! As economic developers, it is always exciting when improvements like these happen in our community. Prospective business owners consider access to medical care along with many other factors when looking to expand in a new location. The Foundation appreciates Mr. Gilmore and the staff at ACMC, as they have always been willing to open their doors for visits from prospects we have hosted in Crossett. With this addition to the hospital, we can confidently say that our hospital is able to administer critical care that is often lifesaving.

Much of the work was completed in-house by ACMC's Engineering Department. The walls were replaced with new sheet rock and insulation, along with new windows in the unit. The nurse's station was completely remodeled, and quartz countertops were added to all the window seals, nurses' station, and counters within the unit. Each new CCU room has a new "whiteboard" system that allows the nurses to import information from the patient's chart to reduce errors. These whiteboards have information such as who the patient's assigned nurse is and Doctor, as well as dietary restrictions and even the weather. Nurses are also able to check on other patients in other rooms using new technology

While these renovations were taking place, the old generations unit housed critical care patients. Now that this area is no longer being used, the hospital hopes to utilize the space for further expansion.



20th Annual Fundraising Gala

The Hospital Gala was held on Friday, April 28th on the West side of Ashley County Medical Center. It was a great night celebrating the hospital and raising money for the foundation so that ACMC is able to continue serving the individuals of Ashley County and Surrounding areas. We were lucky to have Miss Arkansas, Ebony Mitchell as the guest speaker, and she spoke about her life and how she became Miss Arkansas. Thanks to Ben Gilmore and Howard Beaty, we also had the Arkansas Symphony at the Gala to perform, and they did a wonderful job. We had a lot of silent auction items and several live auction items. Bill Couch cooked steaks and ACMC Dietary staff prepared all of the sides that went with it.