



**MORRILTONAREA**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**ANNUAL REPORT** **2023**





## MORRILTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

### STAFF

Donnie Crain  
President/CEO

Amanda Jones  
Director of Events & Membership Services

Ryan Huffman  
Administrative Assistant/Receptionist

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bobby Keeton  
Chair

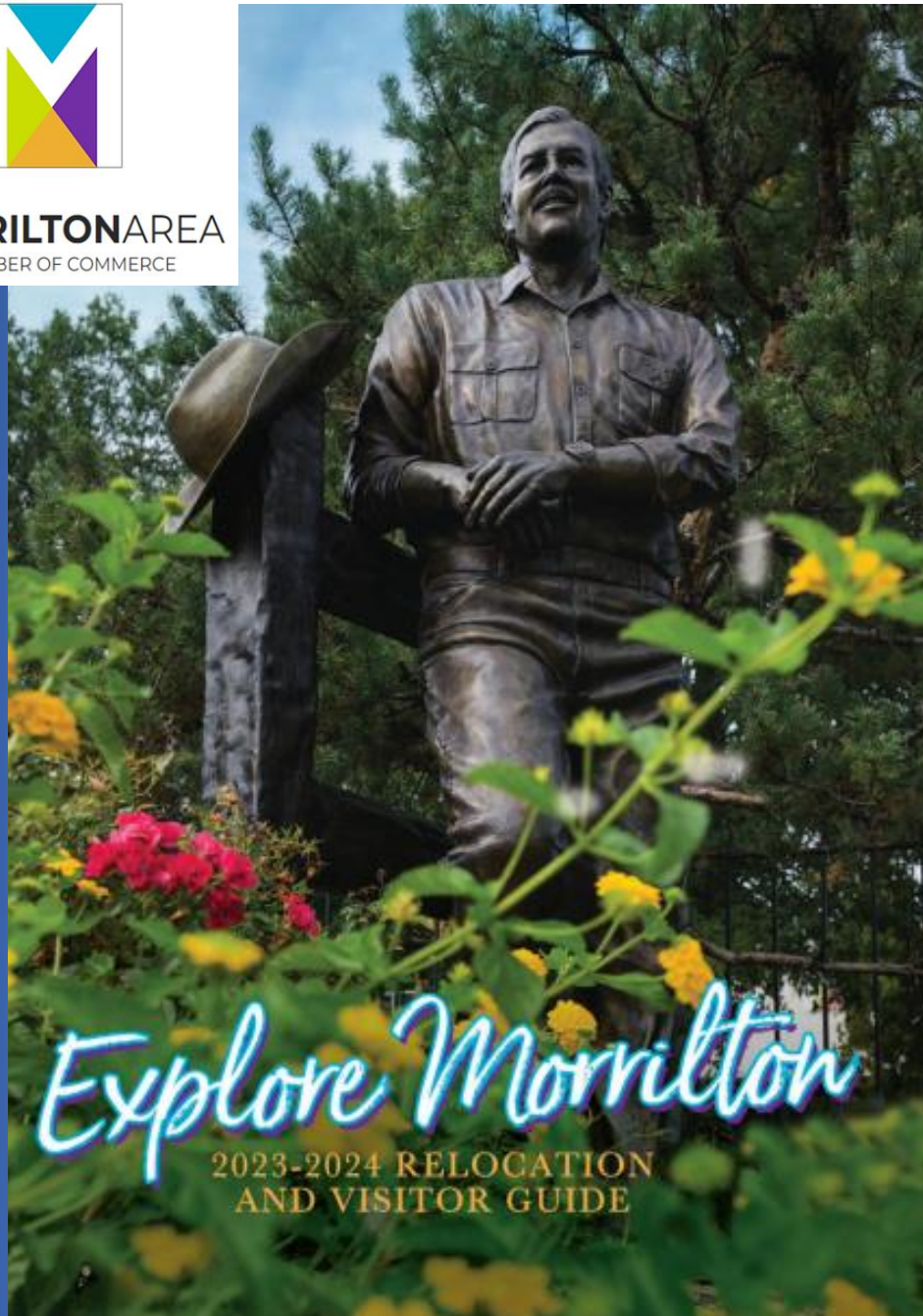
Jordan Ogle  
Incoming Chair

Andy Roller  
Treasurer

Kara Jones  
Immediate Past Chair

Bubba Arnold  
Dominique Harris  
Jonathan Higgins  
Courtney Hill  
Alicia Hugen  
JB Maus  
Richard Sturtevant  
Misty Willbanks

Ex Officio  
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Brandon Zinser, CCEDC Vice Chair  
Dale Gifford, CCRWDD  
Mayor Terry Coleman, City of Menifee  
Mayor Allen Lipsmeyer, City of Morritlon  
Mayor Joshua Young, Mayor of Oppelo  
Mayor Patsy Johnson, Mayor of Plumerville  
Judge Jimmy Hart, Conway County  
Logan Williams, School Counts Initiative  
Lisa Willenberg, UACCM



*Explore Morritlon*  
2023-2024 RELOCATION  
AND VISITOR GUIDE

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## From the President/CEO

### DONNIE CRAIN

This past year has been an exciting time here in Morrilton & the Petit Jean River Valley – and the future looks bright for our community ahead!

Entering 2023, we were optimistic about the direction our community was heading – and with good reason. Situated on Interstate 40 northwest of Little Rock, we find ourselves in between Metro Little Rock and Northwest Arkansas, the state's two economic engines and centers of growth. And with our great schools, UACCM, interstate access, and high quality of life, Morrilton & the Petit Jean River Valley is poised for great things...

With so much going for us, it is critical that we take the necessary steps to fulfill our potential and ensure our growth is done in a way that capitalizes upon our opportunities and only improves our quality of life that makes Morrilton so special in the first place. That has been a primary focus of our Chamber efforts over this past year – developing and actively implementing plans to reach our potential and make it a reality.

Along with opportunity, however, growth brings challenges. Challenges like workforce shortages. Traffic. Too few places to live and affordable housing. Likewise, nationally we are facing issues such as inflation and divisiveness.

Whatever comes, please know that the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce will be working proactively with our partners to ensure that Morrilton & the Petit Jean River Valley not only grows but flourishes. In all we do, my staff and I are 100% committed to helping our community achieve its vision to be Central Arkansas's Preferred Place to Live, Work, Play & Invest!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Donnie Crain". The signature is fluid and cursive.

President/CEO  
Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce



**MORRILTONAREA**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# Who We Are & WHAT WE DO

A 501(c)(6) Nonprofit Organization, the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of the Morrilton & Petit Jean River Valley business community, providing the collaborative leadership needed to achieve the vision to be Central Arkansas's Preferred Place to Live, Work, Play & Invest.



**MORRILTONAREA**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



- 292 Members Strong as of October 31, 2023
- 64 New Members Since November 1, 2022
- Along with the Conway County Economic Development Corporation, the Chamber serves as an important economic development partner of the City of Morrilton and Conway County
- The Chamber of Commerce is funded by its members and partners, contracts with local government, and through numerous community events held throughout the year
- Everything we do is centered on making Morrilton & the Petit Jean River Valley a better place to live, work, play and invest in



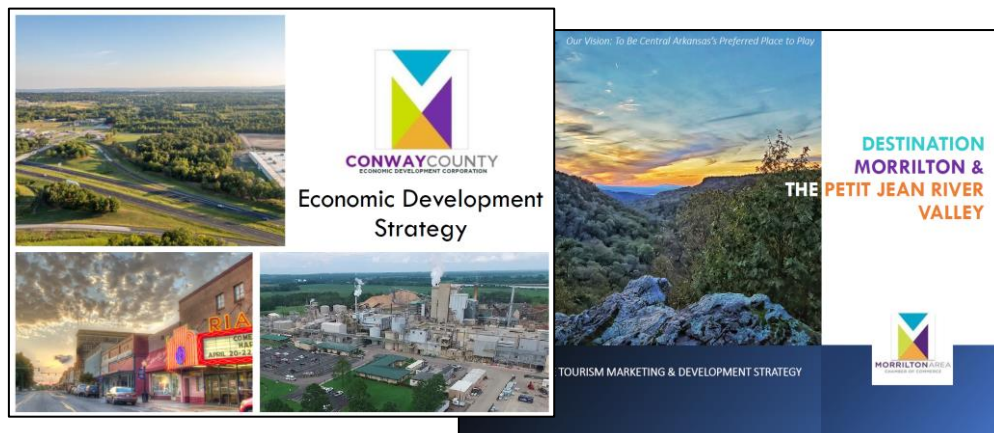


## Building Our **DESIRED FUTURE** Through **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Beginning 2023, the boards of the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Conway County Economic Development Corporation held a day-long Joint Retreat to prepare for the year ahead. Much of the discussion that day focused upon a Joint Strategic Plan and developing our long-term vision for the community, goals for the next three years to move us towards that vision, and metrics to measure our progress.

Knowing where we are wanting to go and what we want to accomplish, we went further and developed specific strategies and action plans – such as our Economic Development and Tourism Marketing & Development strategies – to guide our day-to-day efforts to market our community, help our existing businesses and industries grow & prosper, actively recruit new investment, and make Morrilton & Conway County the preferred place to live, work, play and invest.

And every day, we are working at YOUR Chamber of Commerce to execute these plans and move our community towards its desired future!



## Why We Exist -

# MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Membership Support is what we do to make our members more successful. We do that through -

- Networking Events like our Business After Hours events and new Business Lunch Hour event
- Business Training & Seminars, offering needed and timely training to help our businesses thrive through our partnerships with great resources like Conductor and the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
- The Annual Banquet & Awards Ceremony where we recognize and salute those businesses, individuals and organizations that are doing great things to make Morrilton & the Petit Jean River Valley a better place for business and to live
- The Chamber's first leads group, Growing Conway County, started in January 2023
- Our Weekly Chamber Newsletter, keeping members informed and up-to-date on activities in the community and the goings-on with the Chamber and their fellow Chamber members







## Making Morrilton Even Better!

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In our Community Development efforts, we proactively address issues make the community economically successful – both today & in the future!

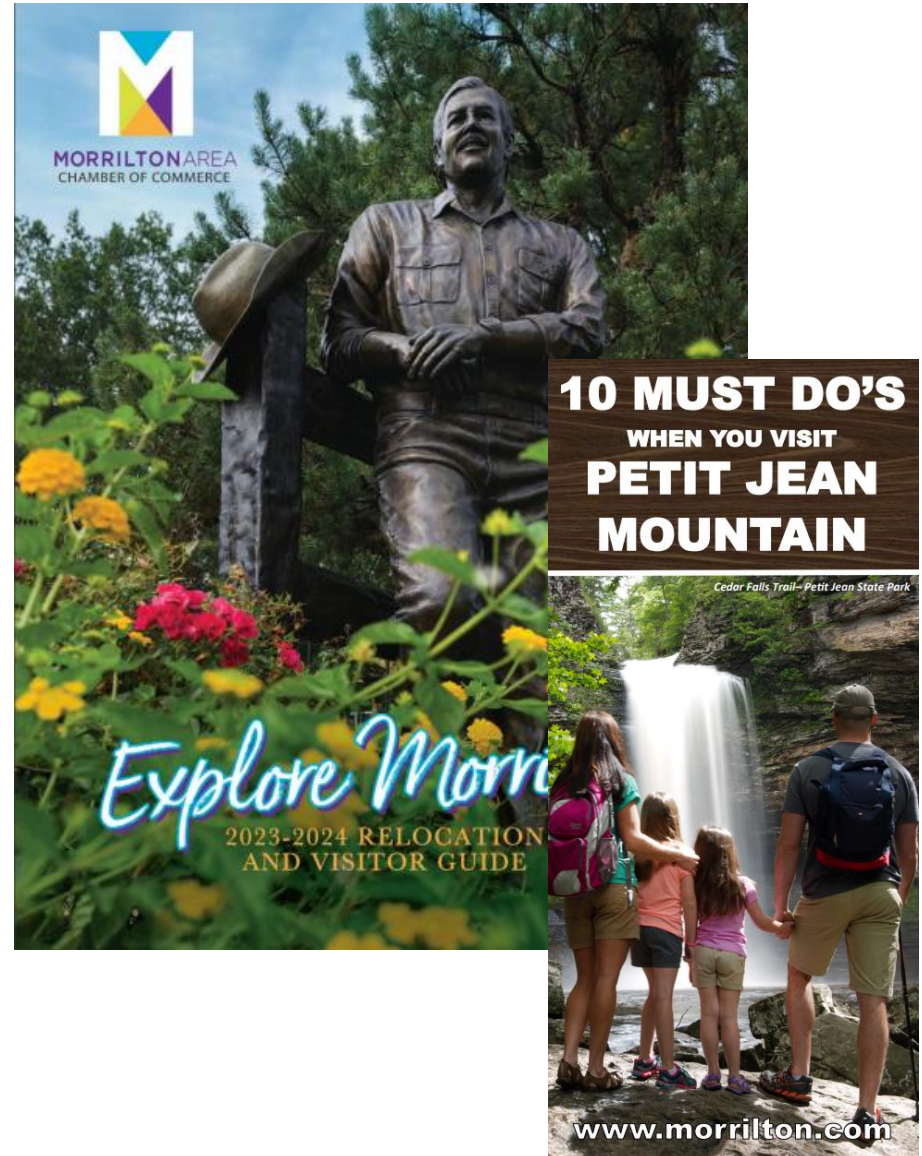
- First impressions are important and in our work with Tree City USA we are working hard to make sure Morrilton makes a wonderful first impression with projects like the one currently underway with the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton
- The lingering effects of COVID prevented us from having a Leadership program between for three years but in August 2023 we restarted the program with 11 class members. The group will be graduating in March 2024
- Continue work to develop the Wayland Holyfield Place as an entertainment venue in Downtown Morrilton. A groundbreaking event was held in March 2023 and work on the site is on-going with a target completion date of Spring 2024, ahead of the Eclipse
- Hosted Teacher Appreciation events at all local schools – Nemo Vista, Sacred Heart, South Conway County, Wonderview, and the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton – to express our heartfelt thanks to the educators for all that they do for our students and the community

# Spreading the Word About Morrilton & Conway County -

## MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

“Getting the word out” to would-be visitors, investors, residents and other target markets.

- Actively working with prospective new businesses and industries to locate and invest in Morrilton & Conway County.
- Coordinated the first “Keep the Cheer Here” holiday shopping event in December 2022
- Developing marketing collateral, placing advertising and social media posts to attract visitors to Morrilton & the Petit Jean River Valley
- Coordinating and producing special events to bring visitors to Morrilton – to include Munchin’ on Main Street, put on by the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce for the first time in March 2023. This past year, much preparation has gone into planning a concert series to be held at the Rialto in April 2024 during the Eclipse
- Multiple interviews were conducted and press releases issued over the course of the year addressing topics of interest to visitors and the business community







## Engaging in the Process - **ADVOCACY**

Working on behalf of members and the community to protect and enhance the business environment of the community.

- The Chamber works in partnership with our local, state, and federal representatives to pursue policies and programs to help our local businesses and industry be successful
- In August 2023 the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce hosted the Central Arkansas Intermodal Authority's Informational Luncheon and Presentation made to local, state and federal officials regarding the proposed port project and the economic development efforts related to it
- The Chamber of Commerce regularly attends meetings of the Morrilton City Council, Conway County Quorum Court, and other meetings to assist where possible and provide a voice for the local business community on policy matters and other business-related items

# Meeting the Needs of Our Members & the Community -

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Building the capabilities and resources necessary to build and market the community to achieve its vision.

- Maintain the Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce offices in Downtown Morrilton at 115 East Broadway Street. Our office is a wonderful resource for information on “All Things Morrilton & Conway County” and plays host to multiple meetings, job fairs, workshops, and other events throughout the year
- Promoted Amanda Jones into the Director of Events & Membership Services in September 2023
- Hired a new part-time Administrative Assistant & Receptionist, Ryan Huffman, in September 2023
- Added a new arm to the Chamber – the Perry County Chamber of Commerce – to serve the business needs of Perry County businesses and strengthen the economic bonds and connections between our two counties
- Reviewed and updated, as needed, the Chamber’s administrative documents – to include the Chamber’s Bylaws and Employee Handbook

