



# BREAKTHROUGH NEWS

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Breakthrough Solutions is a program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with partners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

The purpose of Breakthrough News is to inspire, equip, and empower communities and regions to become vibrant and sustainable in a rapidly changing world.

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## Community Leadership Program Bolsters Community Engagement in Newport

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You can't beat living

in a small town. There's nothing like it. Small towns are often characterized as safer, friendlier, and greener. In these spaces it's easier to build lasting bonds and play an active role in building the type of community you want to live in.

# NEW Vision NEWPORT

Looking for Leadership from Within

Like any lifestyle, the benefits of rural life are not without challenges. Many rural communities face major challenges like population decline, food insecurity, and lack of 21st century infrastructure. These challenges are often too difficult to solve on one's own.

Community engagement and collaborative leadership can help preserve rural towns and help plan communities for the future, according to the paper **Building Engaged Communities — A Collaborative Leadership Approach** by Marisa Cleveland and Simon Cleveland at Northeastern University in Boston.

[Read the full article here.](#)

## GIS at Work – Little Rock School District Election Zones Presented

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GIS – Geographic Information Systems is a powerful tool that enables us to look at any issue from a geographic perspective. No one is a bigger proponent of GIS than Shelby Johnson, Arkansas Geographic Information Services Officer and Breakthrough Solutions partner. We see Shelby at work in the following project.

The Little Rock School District's Community Advisory Board heard presentations on January 23 on three options for school board election zones. The three election zone options were prepared late last year by the state Geographic Information Systems agency at the request of Arkansas Education Secretary Johnny Key.



Shelby Johnson, state Geographic Information Services officer, supervised the development of the three options and said in a recent interview that he

would present those options at the advisory board meeting on January 23 meeting.

“No zone plan can be perfect,” the Geographic Information Systems package on the Little Rock School District states.

“The Little Rock geography, its communities of interest, Fourche Creek, Rock Creek, routes of major thoroughfares and other unique shapes weaving through the LRSD present several challenges to designing compact zones.

“The objective was to develop plan options that follow guiding principles of creating electoral geography that rest on legal precedents,” it says. “Following these requires an interplay of tug and pull between them. A plan cannot perfectly balance contiguousness, compactness, communities of interest and substantially equal population between each zone.”

*Source: Cynthia Howell, Arkansas Democrat Gazette, January 23 2020*

**Read the full article here.**

## Arkansas Community Foundation launches nonprofit directory

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Arkansas Community Foundation has launched an online, searchable database of Arkansas nonprofits.

According to Talk Business and Politics, this database was made possible by support by the Walmart Foundation.



ARKANSAS  
community foundation

You can search for nonprofits via filters such as county, organizational characteristics, type of nonprofit, and more. The Arkansas Community Foundation, lead by President and CEO Heather Larkin is a great resources for communities across Arkansas. This tool raises the visibility of nonprofits in Arkansas communities and helps funders and grant makers understand the important work being conducted across the state to move rural communities forward. Check out your nonprofit by visiting <https://www.arcf.org/guidestar/>.

**Read the full article here.**

# Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

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The fourth industrial revolution is upon us. Communities and business that do not adapt will get left behind. There are a variety of ways businesses and communities are using innovation to stay ahead of the game.

Deloitte, for example is partnering with organizations and communities to steer the workforce into the future. To address this issue, Deloitte and the Global Business Coalition for Education have co-authored a new research study, which examines the skills young people will need in the future, and recommends solutions for business to help them succeed.

The report, **Preparing tomorrow's workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. For business: A framework for action** calls on the business community to take a more proactive role in preparing today's youth to ensure they are ready to become the workforce of tomorrow.

The report highlights opportunities for the business community to contribute, focusing on "how to" best practices to reach and support youth globally. It offers four key recommendations for the business community to address these challenges:"

**[Read the full report here.](#)**

## **CREATE BRIDGES Survey**

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Attention folks in  
Fulton, Izard, Sharp,  
Howard, Little  
River, and Sevier  
Counties.

**Take  
This**

## **Survey**

The CREATE BRIDGES pilot project wants to hear about the experiences of retail, accommodations, tourism or entertainment employee in your community! Retail and hospitality sectors provide jobs and business opportunities that often drive rural economies. University Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is piloting CREATE BRIDGES, a program designed to strengthen these industries in Arkansas. As part of the pilot, CREATE BRIDGES is collecting the opinions and comments of retail, accommodations, tourism, and entertainment employees related to their preparation, training, and benefits in the industry.

**The following Arkansas counties are included: Fulton, Izard, Sharp, Howard, Little River, and Sevier.**

This takes less than 15 minutes. Please help us get the word out about this opportunity, as these employees' feedback will be invaluable to identifying training and policy opportunities to promote the flourishing of these industries.

If you are interested in participating as a volunteer, or if your business or community is having an event at which we can survey, please contact Julianne Dunn at 501-671-2158 or [jbdunn@uaex.edu](mailto:jbdunn@uaex.edu).

For more information about the CREATE BRIDGES pilot program, please

**visit the CREATE BRIDGES website here.**

## **Dr. Mark Peterson Retiring March 3**

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The realm of  
community and  
economic  
development will feel  
a little different in  
Arkansas come

OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT....

## *Dr. Mark Peterson Retiring March 3*



March 3. After more than 30 years serving rural communities across Arkansas, the nation, and the world, Dr. Mark Peterson will retire from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

To say one of Mark's greatest passions is helping communities take control of their future is an understatement. Through a combination of

experience, intellect, and humility, Mark inspires communities to come together to think strategically in times of rapid change.

Often, these partnerships result in full blown strategic action plans--roadmaps that guide communities on their quest to improve quality of life, attract new residents, bolster the workforce, and strengthen marketing and branding. All of his work is tied up in the notion of empowerment; the idea that every community can reach their highest potential and achieve their goals when provided the right tools and opportunity to collaborate.

[Read the full article here.](#)

## **Video of the Month: Shape Your Future-The 2020 Census**

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**Shape  
your future  
START HERE >**



Many community leaders seek ways that they can shape the future of their communities, to realize their desired vision. This short video shows how you can use the 2020 Census as a tool to shape your community's future.



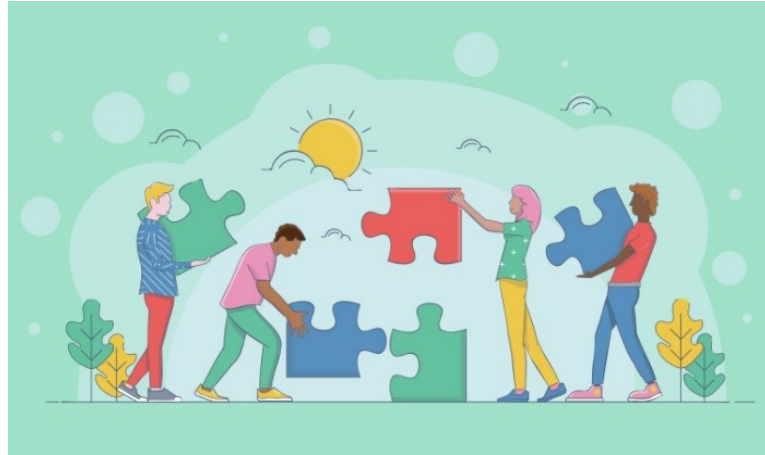
[See the video here.](#)

*Submitted by Shelby Johnson, State Land Information Officer*

# Story of the Month – Iowa Big – Preparing Students for the Future

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The public education system in the US has been the same for over a century, with teachers talking at students and giving them tests. But at Iowa Big, teens address their community's most pressing needs — and the results are benefiting them and their town.



In 2012, some members of the community in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, asked, “What should school look like?” To explore the question, they created the Billy Madison Project (yes, named after the Adam Sandler movie in which a misbehaving adult goes back to school), which brought 65 adults, including local leaders, to a high school to re-experience student life. All 65 of them went through an entire school day, complete with desks, lectures, textbooks, bells and permission slips to use the bathroom.

At the end of the day, they were asked, “What do you think?” Regardless of income, gender, age or politics, each participant reached the same conclusion: “We can do much better.”

[Read the rest of the story here.](#)

## Quote of the Month

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"Life is simple; it's just not easy. Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."

Source unknown

## Coming Events

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**March 1-3: The 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, Ft.**

**Smith:** You'll take home actionable planning tools on tourism development, marketing strategies, social media, current travel trends and more. Not only that, you'll meet new contacts at networking activities. And don't miss the annual Tourism Hall of Fame induction ceremony and the Henry Awards celebration, both of which recognize and honor superior performance in the tourism field.

**For more information, go here.**

**March 6: Jail Resource Day:** the second annual meeting of professionals and citizens concerned with safe jails; includes a panel on community engagement. Sponsored by the Criminal Detention Facilities Review Committee, Arkansas Department Community Correction and co-hosted by the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Public Policy Center, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock. For more information, contact Sterling Penix or Vanessa Kohrs at 501-324-9493 or email [Vanessa.Kohrs@dfa.arkansas.gov](mailto:Vanessa.Kohrs@dfa.arkansas.gov).

**April 6-9: Mid-South Economic Development Course at The Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce, Little Rock AR:** The Mid-South Basic Economic Development Course (MSBEDC) focuses on the fundamental concepts, tools, and skills needed to be successful in today's economic, business, and political environment. The MSBEDC offers a general survey of community & economic development by focusing primarily on strategies and practices.

**For more information, go here.**

**August 3-7: 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Development Institute (CDI): University of Central Arkansas' Brewer Hegeman Conference Center:** The Community Development Institute (CDI) began at the University of Central Arkansas in 1987, with the goal of equipping community leaders and economic development professionals with the tools and strategies they needed to create vibrant, successful communities. 30 years later, CDI is still the go-to resource for training.

**For more information, go here.**

**Two More Resources:**

The Arkansas Procurement Technical Assistance Center helps small businesses find and compete for government contracts through workshops and counseling. They host a slew of workshops for small businesses all over the state on multiple topics.

**You can learn more here.**

The Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center holds workshops for small businesses all over the state on multiple topics.

**You can learn more here.**

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### **More About Breakthrough Solutions:**

Recipient of the Outstanding Program Award and Innovative Program Award by the international Community Development Society, and other awards Breakthrough Solutions is a program of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with partners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. For more information: (501) 671-2253.

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To see past issues of Breakthrough News, go [here](#)

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Simmons Bank

#### **BRONZE**

Arkansas Community Development Society  
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### **Breakthrough Solutions Partners**

We appreciate the involvement and support of the following: Arkansas Community Colleges, Arkansas Community Foundation, Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism, AEDC Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions, Arkansas Geographic Information Office, Arkansas Human Development Corporation, Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce/AIA, AT&T Arkansas, Center for Community and Economic Development, UCA, Cromwell Architects Engineers, Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, Entergy, Ken Hubbell and Associates, Morrilton Area Chamber of Commerce / Conway County Economic Development Corp., Newport Economic Development Commission, Simmons Bank, UA Little Rock Arkansas Economic Development Institute, UA Little Rock School of Public Affairs



If you want to impact your community in a powerful way, forward this email newsletter to other individuals in your community or organization, so they can benefit from the resources, insights, and strategies covered in Breakthrough News.

Best regards,

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Community & Economic Development  
*Strengthening Arkansas Communities*

