



WIOA Partner's Conference 2024

**ACT Work Ready
Communities
“Arkansas is LIT”**

ACT Work Ready Communities Mission



Link



Align



Match

ACT[®] Work Ready Communities



Employers pinpoint skill need and hire right the first time



Educators and policy makers measure skill gaps and build pathways



Individuals prepare for success by understanding employer demands



Economic Developers compete on proven workforce value

571

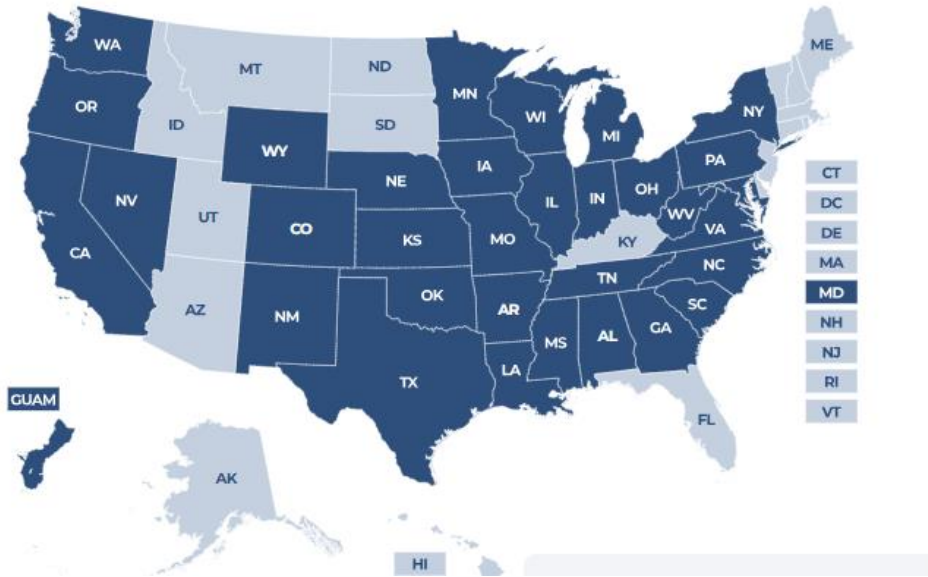
Participating Counties

Over 22,000

Job Profiles Completed

34

States



Work Ready Communities Nationally

Over 5.9M

NCRGs Earned

Over 28,000

Employers Supporting

**2015 Mississippi
County one of
the 1st to join &
2017 the 1st
Certified ACT
WRC in the
State**

Judge Terri Brassfield
(Source KAIT-TV)



Southeast Arkansas REGIONAL WRC LAUNCH APRIL 2017 Delta counties



Senators Jane English and Eddie Cheatham



Bethany Robbins, HR Mgr, Potlatch Corp.



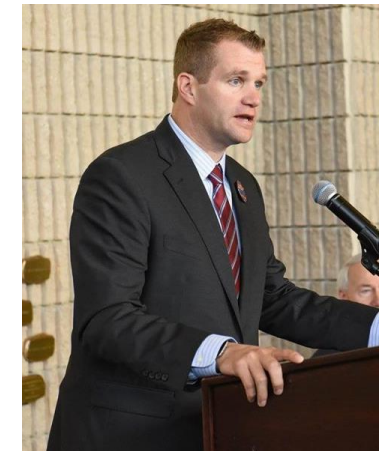
Chris Massingil, Eddie Cheatham, Governor Hutchison



Drs. Karla Hughes and Maria Markham, ADHE Director



ACT® WRC Director Fred McConnell



Star City Superintendent Jon Laffoon

Additional SE counties join 2018



ACT Work Ready Communities Academy Regional Academy Agenda

Dates: February 21-22, 2018

Venue: Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative
912 W. 6th Ave.
Pine Bluff, AR



Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District, INC.

P.O. Box 6806, Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71611 Telephone 870.536.1971 Fax 870.536.7718

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: 3/30/18

Contact: eddie.thomas@southeastarkansas.org

Southeast Arkansas Counties Launch ACT Work Ready Communities Initiative

Three counties in Southeast Arkansas: Arkansas, Grant, and Jefferson, today announced that it will launch efforts to meet all criteria to become certified ACT Work Ready Communities. The initiative will be officially launched during a celebration, which will be held on April 9, 2018, at the State Capitol Rotunda, from 10:30am-11:00am. Governor Asa Hutchinson will be the keynote speaker.

Arkansas Celebrates 1st Certified Region in the State Sept 2022



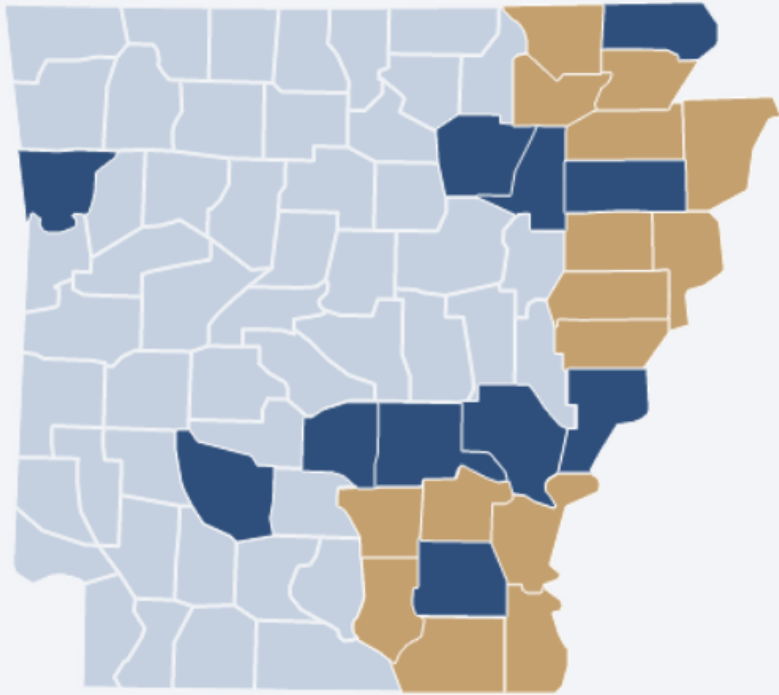
The 10 counties in the Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District have become certified as ACT Work Ready Communities, state and district officials announced Wednesday.

The 10 counties are Arkansas, Ashley, Bradley, Chicot, Cleveland, Desha, Drew, Grant, Jefferson and Lincoln counties.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson said the No. 1 question he gets in recruiting private industry to Arkansas is how is industry going to get a workforce.

"What you have done has allowed us to make the case that we have the workforce that is trained [and] ready to go," the Republican governor told more than 50 officials from southeast Arkansas at the state Capitol. "We know exactly their levels of expertise. They are certified, and we can make the case that southeast Arkansas is ready to do business and ready to receive a new investment of industry."

Hover over the county name to view its location. Click to view full stats.



Participating County

Certified County

[About this data.](#)

ACT National Career Readiness Certificate

ACT WorkKeys NCRC Levels

Platinum 1,847

Gold 19,008

Silver 46,906

Bronze 15,217

Total 82,978

Job Profiles Completed 125

Employers Supporting 691

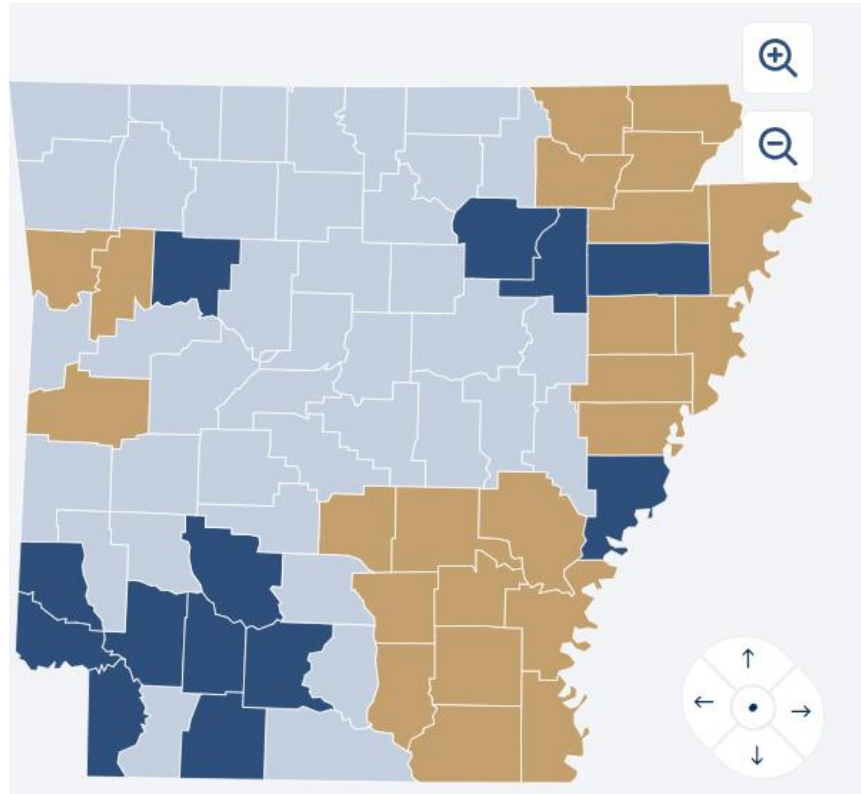
ACT WorkKeys NCRC Data:
01-01-2006 - 08-31-2020

Arkansas Work Ready Communities 2020

26 counties engaged

ACT WorkKeys NCRC Levels

Platinum	3,534
Gold	21,948
Silver	51,965
Bronze	19,644
Total	97,091
Job Profiles Completed	127
Employers Supporting	1001



**Arkansas
WRC – Hot
Springs
Boot Camp
March
2023**

ACT WorkKeys NCRC Earned

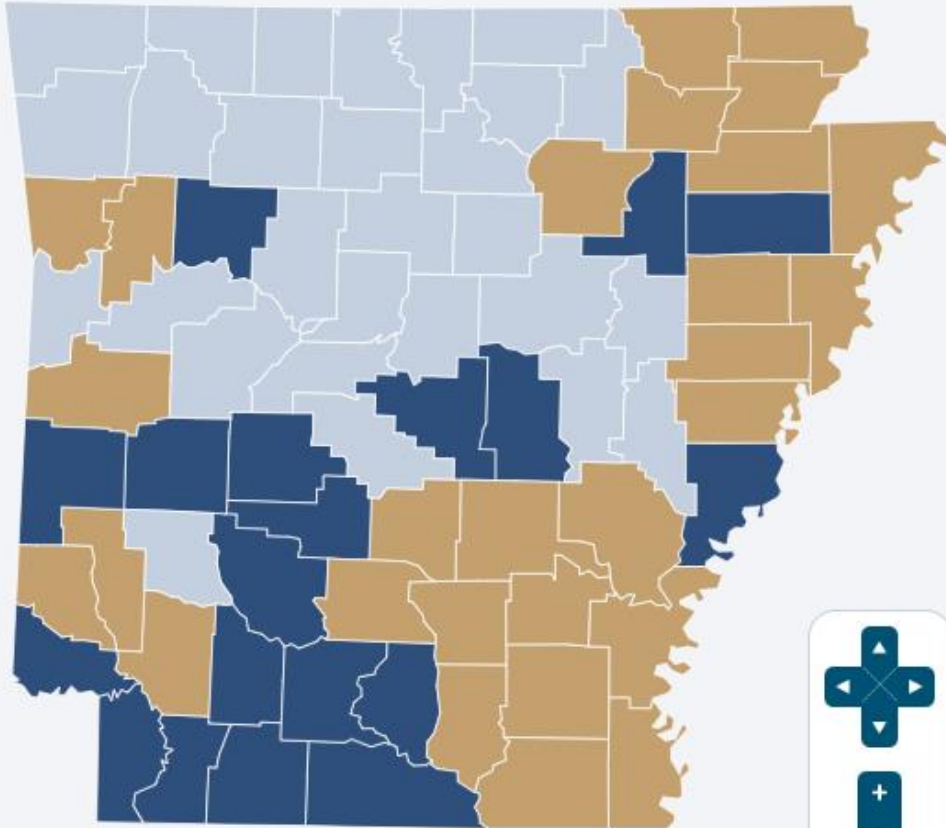
Total: **108,541**

Platinum: 4,809

Gold: 24,309

Silver: 55,955

Bronze: 23,468



1124 Employers
Supporting

47 of 75
communities participating



Arkansas Work Ready Communities Feb 2024 (Boot Camp in Conway, AR)

Arkansas WRC today!

55 of 75
communities participating



Arkansas

ACT WorkKeys NCRC Earned

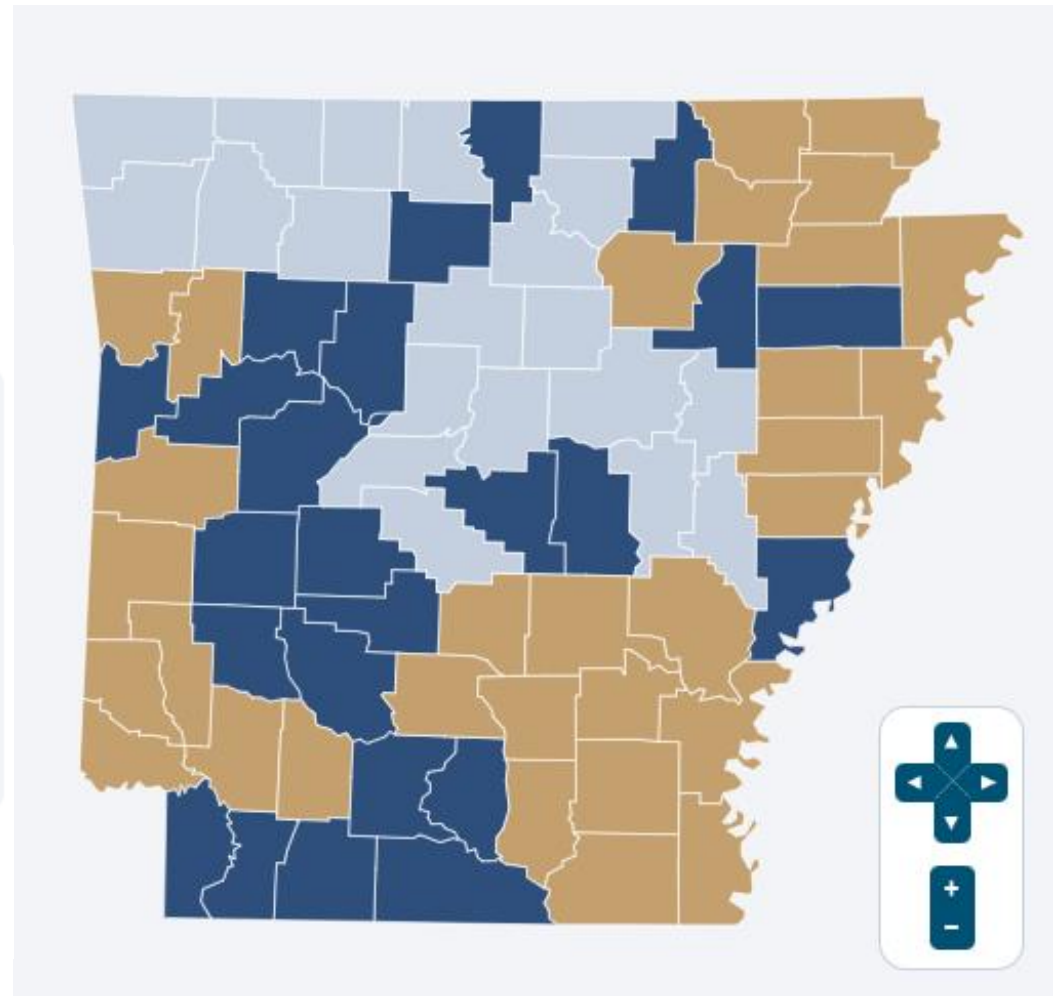
Total: **116,531**

Platinum: 5,781
Gold: 25,958
Silver: 58,610
Bronze: 26,182

What is the NCRC? ⁱ

Job Profiles Completed ⁱ 127

Employers Supporting ⁱ 1245



Tracking Employer Support

“Our founder, Ivan Crossland, Sr. always made education a high priority for himself and for those around him. Our company continues to value high quality education and the Work Readiness test and certificate has proven to be a great indicator of that. To help establish this test in our area schools is a great way for Crossland to promote academic excellence and the value of credentials. We look at it as a win for the students, a win for the schools, and a win for the community,” stated Nathan Kubicek, Crossland Construction.



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Employers in Franklin County recognize or recommend the ACT WorkKeys NCRC

★ Arkansas Economic Development Commission

★ Ozark Area Chamber of Commerce

Ozark City Hall

Rivertowne BBQ

Arkansas Tech University-Ozark Campus

Farm Bureau Insurance

Ozark Pride and Beautification

Main Street Ozark

Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative

Wave Rural Connect LLC

★ Today's Bank of Ozark

Tasty Freeze

A+ Insurance Center - Ozark

Cass Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center

Western Ar Planning & Dev District

Arkansas Construction Education Foundation

CHI St. Vincent Hospital Hot Springs

Methodist Village and Methodist Health & Rehab

Cadence Bank

Harry Robinson Buick GMC

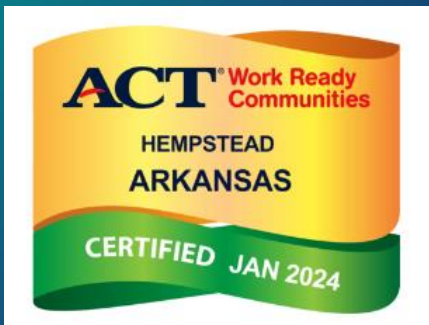
Paris Area Chamber of Commerce

Compass Cold Storage

Sealtite Green Asphalt Maintenance

Doug's Produce

Five Rivers Distribution



Powerful
Results for
Community
Economic
Development



**Boost Labor Market
Competitiveness**



**Equip Business
Attraction/Retention**



**Reduce Poverty and
Improve Quality of Life**



**Enhanced Goodwill
and Enhance Image**



Clint O'Neal
Executive Director
Arkansas
Department of
Commerce

ACT Work Ready
Communities®

The ACT® Work Ready Communities® initiative aligns local education systems and workforce to build a talent pipeline, giving prospective employers and employees a roadmap for success. In Arkansas, there has been a statewide effort to invest in our future workforce based on ACT's research in developing industry-driven skillsets. As a proud owner of an ACT Workkeys® National Career Readiness Certificate, I can attest the assessments identify key foundational skill levels employers need for candidates to be successful across any industry. Our team in Arkansas will continue to encourage businesses to see the value of ACT Workkeys and for communities to pursue the ACT Work Ready Certification.



Randy Zook
President and CEO
Arkansas State
Chamber of Commerce

ACT® Work Ready
Communities®

Each year site selectors who scout areas as potential spots for new economic projects look more and more at the ACT® Work-Ready designation. This recent achievement in Southeast Arkansas validates that the entire region is successfully developing a workforce pipeline to help individuals meet their educational and career goals, as well as demonstrating they are developing an awareness in the business community of the benefits to hiring an individual armed with an ACT NCRC. The number one issue in today's economy is a capable, hireable workforce.



Business Tax Climate

The Tax Foundation



Higher Ed R&D Spending

National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics



% Improvement WorkKeys NCRC

Dec. 2022 to Nov. 2023



Work Comp Ratings

Oregon Dept. of Consumer and Business Services



Industrial Electric Costs

Energy Information Administration



Fiscal Health

Pew Charitable Trusts Fiscal 50 Resources

siteselection.com/digitalEdition/2024/jan/#page=96

SITE SELECTION



“It’s time for the whole world to learn what Arkansans already know: there’s never been a better time to invest in the Natural State and call it home.”

— Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, in a statement released June 14 ahead of her first overseas trade trip

Arkansas ED Commission
1 Commerce Way, STE 601
Little Rock, AR 72202
Clint O’Neal
EXEC. DIR.
501-682-7350

arkansasedc.com

Arkansas

Pop. (2023): 3,055,695
Median household income (2023): \$54,990
Credit Rating: AA / Stable

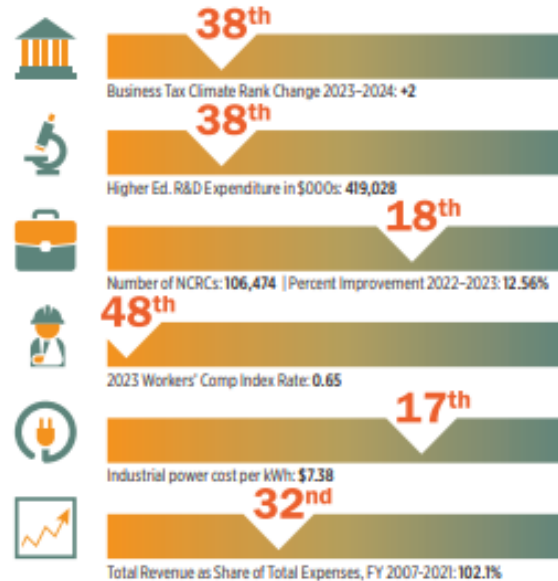
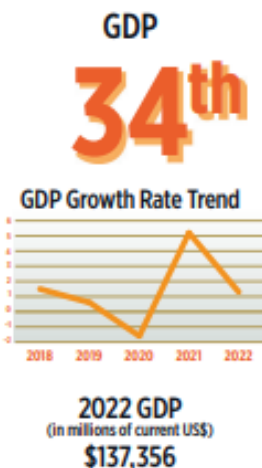
Pop. growth 2023–2028: 0.23%
Median age (2023): 39.4
Right-to-work state: Yes

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

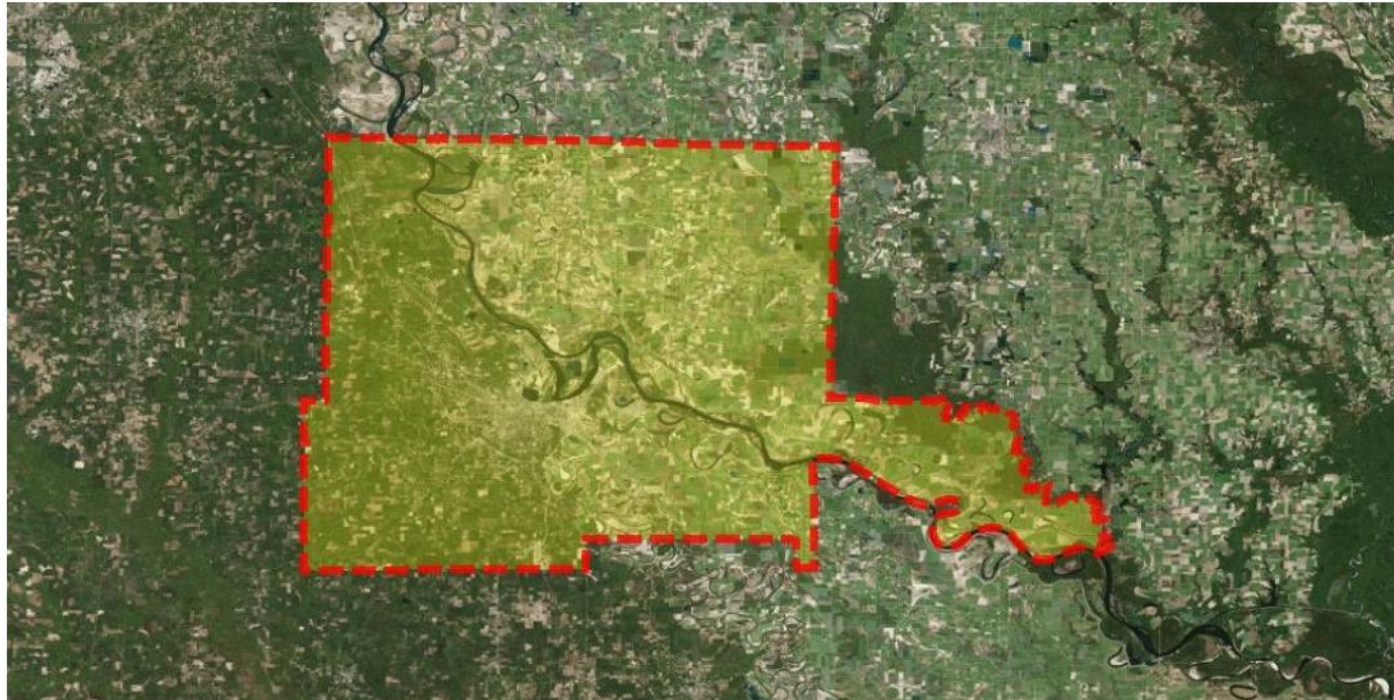
In September, after tax cuts already had been made during the regular session earlier in the year, Gov. Sanders signed into law a bill passed during a special session that cuts Arkansas’ top individual income tax rate from 4.7% to 4.4% and cuts the state’s top corporate income tax rate from 5.1% to 4.8% effective January 1, 2024.

Acting on the recommendation of a tax reform task force, Gov. Sanders in April approved a bill to phase out the “throwback rule” that requires multi-state corporations operating in Arkansas to “throw back” taxes foregone in other states to Arkansas. The gradual elimination is to culminate in 2030.

In March, lawmakers passed the LEARNS Act, a sweeping package of education reforms introduced by Gov. Sanders. The law sets minimum starting salaries for public school teachers at \$50,000, awards raises to veteran teachers, provides for incentive-based bonuses and allows the state to pay student loans of teachers that agree to work in struggling districts. “Education Freedom Accounts” will allow families to use public dollars to attend non-public schools. The law prohibits teaching Critical Race Theory in public schools and bans classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual identity before fifth grade.



ACT Work Ready Communities Jefferson County, AR



The View from Site Selection Consultants

Work Ready Communities are setting themselves apart; positioning themselves to attract new companies

—Robby Burgan
Manager, Location Strategies
Evergreen Advisors

When I see that a county is ACT Work Ready I know that they are following the steps in planning for the current and future workforce. Therefore, our tendency at FCG is to look strongly at ACT Work Ready Communities for new site locations. I would encourage all communities to seek that status.

—Mr. Deane C. Foote, CEcD
President & CEO
Foote Consulting Group

As a corollary would recommend that all counties become work ready certified

—Mr. Dennis Donovan
Location Strategy and
Site Selection Advisor

ACT Work Ready is truly the best workforce development marketing tool I have seen.

—Chad Chancellor
Co-Founder/CEO
The Next Move Group

ACT Summit

A dynamic event where leaders from **K-12, higher education, and workforce** sectors collaborate to tackle today's most critical challenges, sharing actionable insights and innovative strategies to shape the future of education and the workforce.

Join us July 15 -17, 2025 in Nashville!

Call for Proposals and more information available now:
www.act.org/actsummit

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Arkansas
counties
received
awards
for WRC
2024



