



# PARIS ACTION PLAN

## Executive Summary

This document, the Paris Action Plan, is a strategic blueprint for the growth and development of Paris, Arkansas and the surrounding area over the next five years.

This document was created as a result of public forums and action teams working together over the past six months to identify a vision and goals for the community, as well as some promising long term strategic opportunities.

Many people and organizations worked together on this effort, including representatives from the City of Paris, Paris School District, Logan County Industrial Development Commission, Subiaco Academy, Mount Magazine State Park, Paris Merchants Association, Paris Chamber of Commerce, local banks, and many other citizens and businesses from the area.

To craft this document, the community worked with the University of Central Arkansas' Community Development Institute and the Breakthrough Solutions program at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension.

The interaction between the universities and the community began in August 2014, when a group of community and economic development professionals visited Paris to assess the community's current situation and help them identify breakthroughs to move the community forward.

As a result of that session, and monthly meetings since that time, several breakthroughs have been identified as part of this process. A summary of these key breakthroughs are identified in the next section.

Many projects are already underway, and many others are planned and outlined in this document. Community and economic development is a long term effort that can take many years to bear fruit.

The Paris Action Plan lays the groundwork for those efforts and helps focus the enthusiasm and passion that the Paris citizens have exhibited throughout the planning process.

## Breakthroughs and Impact

In times of rapid change, successful communities create breakthroughs to move forward toward their desired future.

Congratulations to the community leaders and citizens of Paris who have developed these breakthroughs and breakthrough solutions:

- **ATU Career Satellite Skills Training Center** – This center has been on the drawing board for two years, and represents a strategic leap toward preparing a work force to meet the needs of local employers, as well as students and adults seeking to improve their employability.
- **Branding Paris** – Our brand expresses the identity of our community and where it is going. A fresh logo for Paris was developed that is compelling and attractive to both local citizens and visitors.
- **Taking Quality of Life to the Next Level** – Several projects are underway that have the potential to directly improve the quality of life in Paris, including commercial and residential codes and code enforcement, a neighborhood watch program, building public rest rooms for the Eiffel Tower Park, creating additional murals, plus other projects to improve the quality of life.



## Mission Statement

*Paris Area Community Kickstart (PACK) was formed to promote a culture in which citizens, businesses, and visitors “Fall in Love with Paris” by:*

- *enhancing the quality of life for our citizens,*
- *advancing local business and industry to ensure success and growth in the global economy, and*
- *providing memorable experiences for our visitors.*

## Vision Statement

*The Paris area captures the essence of what it means to be “American at Heart.” Through her rich history, charming culture, enduring economy, and picturesque landscape, the spirit of Paris provides a glimpse into the heart of America.*

- *The culture of Paris is captured in the heart of her fairs, festivals, museums, and southern charm,*
- *The economy of Paris is captured in the heart of her thriving business community and industries,*
- *The landscape of Paris is captured in the heart of her historic town square, the rolling hills of the Ozark National Forest, and Mount Magazine towering above the horizon, and*
- *The spirit of Paris is captured in the heart of her dedicated citizens tirelessly working for the next generation.*

*An extended 10 year vision can be found in the Appendix.*

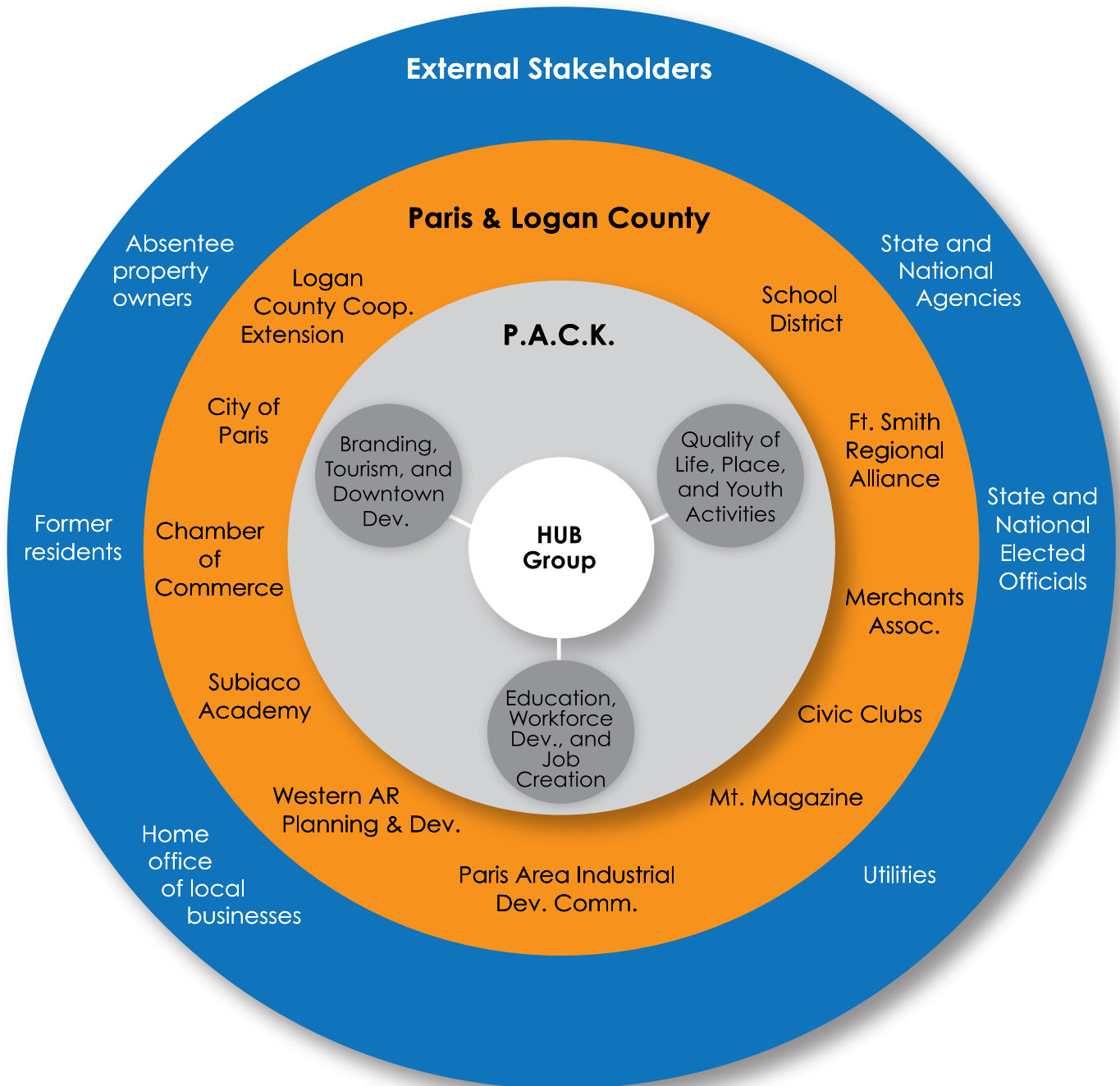
## PACK Core Values

- Be inclusive, seeking involvement from throughout the community.
- Generate excitement, energy, and action.
- Build on and support existing organizations and community initiatives.
- Create an ongoing development process that continues as new opportunities emerge.



# PACK Stakeholder Analysis and Organizational Structure

## Paris Area Community Kickstart (PACK) Stakeholder Analysis and Organizational Structure



## Action Teams

Priority areas identified in the report were prepared by the Community Development Institute (CDI).

The PACK stakeholders selected three priority areas around which action teams would be formed. The group decided to create three ‘super groups.’ It was stated that having too many groups would stretch the local leadership group thin. The selected priority areas are:

- Education, Work Force Development, & Jobs
- Quality of Life, Quality of Place, & Youth Activities
- Tourism, Marketing, Branding, & Downtown Development

The priority team members are listed on the following tables.

<b>Education, Workforce Development, &amp; Jobs</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Lee Lane (co-chair)	Industrial Development Commission/Single Parent Scholarship Fund
Joe Schluterman (co-chair)	Paris Ford/ Merchants Assoc.
Wayne Fawcett (co-chair)	Paris Schools/PACC
Bill Elsken	Shelter Insurance/Logan CO Ind. Dev. Comm
Doug Morris	COS and First Christian Church
Margaret Wilks	Paris Schools
Jarrood Yarnell	First National Bank

<b>Quality of Life, Quality of Place, &amp; Youth Activities</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Karey Sparks (co-chair)	Logan Co. Glass/PACC & Merchants Assoc.
Jess Cooper	Scott’s on the Square
Daniel Rogers	Mayor of Paris
Bob Harper	U of A Extension Service/ Agriculture
Mary Sullivan	City Clerk/Kiwanis



<b>Tourism, Marketing, Branding, &amp; Downtown Development</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Tonya Baumgartner (co-chair)	Paris Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
Suzanne Nickerson	Paris Realty/PACC
Kevin Berry	Island Cowgirl/PACC
Heidi Ryan (co-chair)	Mount Magazine State Park
Kim Hertlein	Cooper Clinic/Health Care
Donna Spaght	Mt. Magazine Lodge
Annette Berry	Island Cowgirl
Bonnie Harmon	Scott’s on the Square/Merchants Association
Tonya Varnell	Paris Schools/schools
Jan Reed	U.S. Forest Service/Agriculture
Kenny Vines	Grapevine & Big Red/Merchants Assoc.

## Experience Paris Today

### Home of Mount Magazine - Naturally Beautiful

Hiking, Fishing, Boating, Swimming, Hunting, Lodge, Cove Lake

### Historical Square - 100,000 Christmas Lights

Shopping, Dinning, Car Shows, Flowers, Maps

### Unique Museums - Local History Books

Logan County Museum, Coal Miners Museum, Wine Museum, Civil War Battle Site. Books: Coal Mines, People of Paris, "Wagon Wheel"

### Eiffel Tower Park - With Fountain

Butterfly Festival, Frontier Day, Farmers Markets, Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinners, Easter Egg Hunt, Fall County Fair

### Seeking Industry – Grow With Us

Manufacturing, Commercial, Retail, General Aviation Airport, Industrial Park, State Credits, Grants, Logan Co. Industrial Development

### Community Assets – Pride of Place

Public/Private Schools, Health Clinic/Hospital, Walking/running exercise course, Chamber Facebook/Website, Compassionate and Giving Citizens, Churches, Non-Profits

## Tourism, Downtown Development, and Marketing

The Paris area promotes an atmosphere for citizens and visitors that entices them to, "Fall in love with Paris" and surrounding areas.

We will continue to enhance our ability to attract tourists, keep in touch with our culture, and provide an ongoing experience that will support community efforts to promote "Work, Stay, Eat, and Play" in the Paris area.

Paris is developing a seamless vision for visitors that creates longer visits and increased number of visits. The enriched tourism environment will be enhanced by participation of retail businesses and citizens alike.

## Paris Brand



*French in name, American at heart*

## 2014 Completed Events and Activities

- Eiffel Tower Park dedication.
- Dinner on the square.
- "Town Open House."
- Square lighting and parade.
- Hospital Auxiliary Annual Thanksgiving Dinner.
- Final Farmers Market extravaganza.
- Tourism data collected for the area.
- Magnets, shot glasses, t-shirts designed and ordered.
- Chamber and Lodge in contact for coordinated events.
- City maps created.
- Books, articles, and other items are available to visitors on Paris's history: "Wagon Wheel" and a new information book "Paris Past" are both available.
- Chamber of Commerce website/calendar of events.

## Current Focus

The Paris area has recognized that people want a unique experience for a vacation environment. Visitors love local folklore, costumes, experiences that are unique to the area, and a distinct community culture that can be enjoyed by visitors of all ages and wonderful memories can be taken home. Tourism opportunities in the Paris area need to be available for all generations.

Paris's Tourism Action Team is working with Mt. Magazine Lodge preparing opportunities to coordinate activities for groups that are visit the Lodge.

The Paris area has a laid-back, rich history that can attract, entertain, and help bring people into the area, this strengthening the local economy.

Paris's newest project is a collaborative effort between community leaders, the city, and citizens - Paris Eiffel Tower Park is a fun, unique experience that creates a Parisian culture on the square and has started a booming wedding business.

The Paris area also identified the need for memorabilia to trigger delightful memories of the experiences in the area.

### *Current Projects*

#### **Publicity and Marketing:**

- Light pole banners to line street; proposal approved, awaiting funding.
- New exterior wall murals.
- City branding.
- Increase awareness of the Paris area as the Home of Mt. Magazine.

#### **Tourism Activities and Experiences:**

- "Passport to Paris;" start the passport to Paris experience, working in cooperation with Mount Magazine to host visitors around the Paris area.
- "Peak to Peak Motorcycle Run" will stop at the Eiffel Tower Park.
- Coordinate with the Abbey, wineries, and local attractions to create unique and ongoing experiences.
- Flyers in Visitor Centers and Chambers across Arkansas.

#### **Downtown Revitalization:**

- Merchants Association is discussing ideas to boost tourism; money has been raised to start small projects.
- Explore funding opportunities for downtown revitalization.
- Explore Main Street AR/Downtown Network opportunities.
- Increase utilization, beautification, and coordination with all buildings around the square and main highways.

### *Five Year Goals*

The city of Paris identified the following five year goals involving tourism:

- Fill all buildings downtown, with 10 new businesses in the downtown area.
- Renovate facades on 10 buildings downtown.
- Ensure that 50% of all visitors and buses that visit Mount Magazine come to see attractions in Paris.
- Apply for and receive additional state and national awards for creative tourism development.
- Establish a consistently branded community image.
- Enhance on-line presence and accessibility; website, Arkansas River Valley Tri-Peaks Tourism Association.
- Launch "Shop Locally" campaign.
- Joint advertising between Paris and Mount Magazine State Park.
- Tours of the area (wineries, Subiaco Abby, museums, etc.).
- Bike trails that connect with paths from NWA to Hot Springs.
- "Tour de Paree" (bike from Paris to Mt. Magazine Lodge).
- Maps for shopping and points of interest.
- Outdoor bistros and outdoor coffee shops; expand on specialty shops.
- Restoration of courthouse.
- Improve windows and exterior appearance of buildings.

## Economic Development and Workforce Training

Paris Area Economic Development efforts will continue to focus on business retention and expansion, job creation, new business development, and access to much needed technical training for residents. The Paris area is in the process of establishing skills training and employment relationships with local industries and health care providers, educational requirements with the local schools, and adult education opportunities with the local college.

These relationships will enhance the skills pipeline so that the workforce development activities can support the growth of existing industry and increase employment.

### *2014 Completed Events and Activities*

- Paris/Eiffel Tower French festival in spring; Paris in summer, fall, and winter events.
- Expand farmers' market to indoor facility.
- Wall murals, artists' exhibits, sidewalk art.
- Hold two student performances and musical events in downtown annually.
- Develop Smith Hospital Museum.
- Establish historical home tours.
- Secured facility for the ATU Skills Satellite Training Center.
- Secured one third of the funding to begin the center.
- Received satellite status from the Arkansas Career Education Department.
- City removed the metal poles which had held the chain link fence around Rethink.
- City removed the wooden building in the back of the Rethink lot.

### *Current Focus*

Many potential workforce members in the Paris area are missing soft and technical skills, and 60% of local high school graduates INTEND to stay within 50 mile radius of Paris. Many workforce members leave the local (50 mile radius) area for employment because of lack of opportunities in Paris currently. There is a mismatch between high school graduates and available jobs. Vocational technical schools focus on non-college bound students but not on available jobs in the area. The Paris Public Schools have teamed with Arkansas Tech University-Ozark to establish a Satellite Skills Training Center in Paris for high school students, adults and employees of local industries and health care providers.





The Paris Skills Training Leadership Council was formed two years ago with the express purpose of providing the training skills the students and adults in our area need for immediate employment by local industries and health care providers and providing local industries and health care providers with employees who have learned the soft and technical skills necessary to become productive, dedicated employees. To be successful this project must have the active support of the local schools, ATU-Ozark, local industries, local health care providers, the community, state legislators and local elected officials. This project continues to be a dedicated team effort.

### *Current Projects*

#### **Business Recruitment, Retention, and Expansion**

- Working with Logan County Industrial Development Corporation to bring industry in to the area.
- The Economic Development Committee is in the process of reviewing Paris's economic strengths/weaknesses. The group first wants to enhance the positives and second to understand what caused the negatives and what can be done to mitigate them in the future.
- Continue to work with local legislators to grow Paris area.

#### **Workforce Preparation**

- ATU Career Center will be fully established by fall 2015.

### *Five Year Goals*

The city of Paris identified the following five year goals involving economic development and workforce:

- Fill all industrial buildings, with an additional 250 net jobs in the community.
- Add two more programs to the ATU Skills Satellite Center.



*ATU-Ozark*



*Paris High School*



*ReThink Mfg. and Skills Training Center*

## Quality of Life and Place

- Establish a cooperative partnership program with the high school, the satellite center, and local employers.
- Identify and develop funding and finance mechanisms for economic and community development.
- Review planning regulations and ordinances to recommend removal/changes of any that impact the potential growth of Paris.
- Make the industrial park site ready with utilities (power, water, sewer, electricity, Internet access, gas)
- Recruit a large employer who believes in the Paris vision.
- Identify and develop a community leadership program.
- Recruit at least four Paris residents to participate each year in statewide leadership programs such as the Community Development Institute and LeadAR.
- Work with AEDC and state entities to identify new industries and advertise our assets.
- Work with our state legislators to improve the financial and permitting support by the state for small businesses locating in rural areas like Paris.
- Develop a workforce mentor program.
- Identify people who lived in Paris and would consider coming back: retirees who have energy to support economic development and/or business owners who would consider expanding or relocating their business back to Paris.
- Contact mayors and community leaders of neighboring communities to create joint efforts with those communities to attract industries.
- Seek businesses associated with farming needs and/or products.

Quality of life in the Paris area will focus on creating a deep bond between the city and its citizens and fulfilling all citizens' needs. The quality of life attracts people and business to the community, either through tourism, new residents, or business investments.

### *2014 Completed Events and Activities*

- Requests for improvement of three community beautification projects were submitted to the mayor.
- Ropes Course partnership between Paris Schools and the Lodge on Mt. Magazine; focused on providing team building exercises for business and organizations through the Lodge.

### *Current Focus*

The Ropes Course is an under-utilized asset that is already in place and fully operational, but it is unadvertised and concerns over liability, marketability, and profitability exist.

There is also a lack of code enforcement: garbage being left out for an unnecessary length of time, yard management isn't enforced which would allow for a more appealing look throughout neighborhoods, etc. The Keep Paris Beautiful campaign is an effective organization that has been in operation for almost four years.

There is a push to increase the number of community murals around the downtown area; the city could capitalize on some of the history of the town and encompass some of the city's attractions.

There is a horse camp that is already established, but is currently being used for ATV's. Since there are no horses available for the 34 miles trail that leads to Huckleberry Mountain. There is a strong need for a horse camp at Mt. Magazine.

## *Current Projects*

### **Beautification**

- Keep Paris Beautiful campaign.
- New community murals are being planned.
- Code enforcement is underway.

### **Activities and Services**

- Creation of public restrooms in downtown; waiting for allocation of city budget to move forward.
- Exploring potential for a Frisbee golf course; a business has been contacted for a free assessment and design of a course for a small fee. Local businesses could sponsor holes to fund this project.

### **Public Safety and Housing**

- Establish commercial and residential code for the city in coordination with the part-time code enforcer at the police department. Enact code to clean up properties in Paris that do not reflect a clean, growing community.
- There have been conversations with the police department on how best to launch a neighborhood watch program in Paris, including neighborhood meetings and informational flyers.
- New sidewalks on Kalamazoo to the high school. Seeking safety grants.
- Paris police department is looking into how it can be involved in activities at the Paris Boys and Girls Club.

## *Five Year Goals*

The city of Paris identified the following five year goals involving quality of life:

- Double the size of the Paris Farmers' Market and move it to a new building downtown.

- Establish a biking walking trail system that encompasses the entire community, with work underway to link it to Mount Magazine.
- Implement substantial beautification and face-lifts for highways 22 and 309 through code enforcement and beautification efforts.
- Clean up and/or remove all abandoned buildings in the community
- Add historical signs throughout the town that will draw an interest for visitors and a sense of pride for residents.
- On the vacant lot on the southwest corner of the square build a replica of the Arc De Triomphe.
- Expand Wood Street Park facilities and park lighting.
- Recruit civic organizations to lead community improvement projects.
- Launch neighborhood pride campaign.
- Improve the community infrastructure: water, sewer, power, etc.
- Build more safe sidewalks for students walking to school.
- Reestablish the horse camp at Mt. Magazine.
- Expand services of Paris Boys and Girls Club, scouts, and teen events
- Help seniors find suitable housing, medical services, and daily support.
- Develop water park/splash pad.



*Ropes Course*

## Appendix

### *Vision for Paris in 10 Years*

- Paris has been featured by at least one major publication as one of the best small towns in America (under 10,000 in population) that displays the true American heart and spirit. Paris receives a leadership award from the National Main Street Center.
- Paris is often used as a case study by other community leaders throughout the region as a best-in-class example of how to develop and sustain a thriving small community.
- Paris has a common brand being implemented in all community events, marketing, signage, etc.
- Well defined goals are set out by the PACK stakeholders for short-term, mid-term, and long-term completion. Measurable progress is made each and every year among each of the action teams.

### *Tourism, Downtown Development, and Marketing*

- Tourists consider Paris a “must stop” location before they visit the area. This includes people planning to visit Mount Magazine, Altus wine country, Subiaco Abbey, or even people passing along I-40 on their way to a major event such as Bikes Blues & BBQ or a Razorback sporting event.
- The Eiffel Tower with the Courthouse in the background has become an iconic picture of Arkansas. In Arkansas marketing brochures and magazines the picture is as common as seeing a picture of Hawksbill Crag, the Buffalo River, or Little Rock skyline. The Eiffel Tower Park has become a hot spot for tourists. A picture of the Eiffel Tower with the courthouse in the background is a must have shot for all area visitors. As people stop at the Park for a picture they always are caught strolling around the square due to the inviting small town atmosphere. Pictures of visitors with the Eiffel Tower and the courthouse in the background are commonly seen on social media

and in mainstream media.

- Satellite events such as rodeos, motorcycle rallies, car shows, and music festivals that have formed around annual events such as the Butterfly Festival, County Fair, and Frontier Days have become so popular that they are now separate events of their own. These satellite events now draw in an entirely new group of tourists.
- With a common theme evident throughout the community Paris now has a different “vibe” than it did 10 years ago. Residents and business owners are reflecting an image of what the perfect small town America looks like. This image has become the Paris brand.
- The brand invites the tourists to stop at the Eiffel Tower and take note of the southern charm Paris has to offer. It invites them to escape their everyday life, relax, and enjoy life in the “Heart of America.”

### *Economic Development and Workforce Training*

- Paris has at least 4 more employers than there were in 2015 that employ more than 50 full time employees. Recruiting of large employers has been successful by selling the Paris vision.
- The downtown square received a structural and cosmetic face-lift and sidewalks, benches, lawns, signs, and buildings are restored to like new condition. Building on the Paris area vision, active recruitment of merchants to the square has begun in full force. The downtown square is operating at full capacity. There are no business vacancies and activity on the square is reminiscent of the mid-20th century. Several new merchants have opened on Express Street and Elm Street.
- The healthy economy and community spirit has led multiple major employers to seriously consider expanding to Paris. Recruitment of major industry employers is organized by the PACK stakeholders and the city council. At least ten major employers of over 250+ are identified, contacted, and offered incentives to expand in Paris.



- At least one major employer of 250+ employees has expanded to Paris.

### *Quality of Life and Place*

- The Farmer’s Market is widely recognized as one of the best in the region. It has grown beyond a Paris event and is now a county event. It is a true destination for visitors and an anticipated event by locals all year long. Beyond local produce there are now some products from Arkansas, arts and craft booths, games for kids, and other entertainment on a regular basis. It is becoming a standard weekly gathering for many in the community and most weekends draw several visitors from surrounding areas.
- The community parks are a hub for popular community events. A new park on the south side of town and a city wide walking/biking trail are fully developed and regularly used. Regular community events in the city parks are widely attended and very popular.
- Eyesores along major traffic areas such as Highway 22 and 309 are nonexistent. Codes have been accepted by residents and are strictly enforced, which has created an inviting portrait of small town America.
- City codes have been updated and are adhered to willingly. Major traffic areas around the square, Highway 22, and 309 have undergone a substantial face-lift. Most abandoned buildings in these areas have been cleaned or re-purposed.



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## *CDI and U of A Cooperative Extension Service*

The Community Development Institute Central (CDI), established in 1987 at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway trains community and economic development professionals in Arkansas and surrounding states.

The complete CDI experience is a three-year training program, with one week of training per year.

Participants are exposed to a comprehensive, applied approach to the field of community and economic development. CDI is relevant for both new and seasoned professionals because it focuses on best practices and current trends.

This year, Community Development Kickstart was created to provide a unique opportunity for CDI graduates to apply their knowledge and skills to a real-life situation and to kick start a community and economic development process in one community.

Community Development Kickstart uses the Breakthrough Solutions Model from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with Dr. Mark Peterson, professor of Community and Economic Development, serving as Class 4 director for this initiative.

The Breakthrough Solutions Program is a partnership initiative with the purpose of equipping communities and regions in Arkansas to be vibrant, sustainable, and resilient in this 21st century economy.

Communities in Arkansas were invited to apply for this unique opportunity, and Paris was selected. Once the Paris community was selected as the Advanced Year community, community leaders began collaborating with CDI and U of A Cooperative Extension Service in July of 2014.

To learn more about CDI visit [www.uca.edu/cdi](http://www.uca.edu/cdi). To learn more about Breakthrough Solutions visit [www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx](http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx).





# Fall in love with PARIS

ARKANSAS

