



**PINE BLUFF**  
ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION  
COMMISSION

**2023  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**





# PINE BLUFF ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION COMMISSION

The Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission was enabled pursuant to state statute and enacted in 1978 through city ordinance. The A&P Commission is the governing body for Explore Pine Bluff, the city's official tourism office. Per state statute, the Commission is comprised of seven members: two members shall be members of the governing body of the city and selected by the governing body and shall serve at the will of the governing body, four members shall be owners or managers of the tourism industry (with at least three of whom shall be owners or managers of hotels, motels, or restaurants) and shall serve for staggered terms of four years, and one member shall be from the public at-large and shall serve for a term of four years.

Because this Commission was set up pursuant to state law, the A&P Commission is not part of the City, rather we are an autonomous commission that must govern according to state laws.

## CITY OF PINE BLUFF

**Dr. Glen Brown, Jr., Chair**  
Pine Bluff City Council, Ward 2, Position 2  
Appointed: 3/6/17

**Lloyd Holcomb, Jr.**  
Pine Bluff City Council, Ward 1, Position 1  
Appointed: 1/17/19

## TOURISM INDUSTRY

**Berinda Eugene, Vice Chair**  
Cheers At The BBQ Hut  
Term Expires: 5/31/27

**Steven King**  
Subway on Main  
Term Expires: 4/30/27

**Rosie Pettigrew**  
RJ's Sports Grill & Bar  
Term Expires: 10/31/25

**Jamie McAfee**  
Pine Bluff Country Club  
Term Expires: 6/1/24

## PUBLIC AT-LARGE

**Barbara Dunn**  
Southeast Arkansas College  
Term Expires: 9/30/26

\*All commissioner information effective through 12/31/23

## STAFF

**Sheri Storie – Executive Director**  
**Jimmy Cunningham, Jr. – Director of Tourism Development**  
**Betty Brown – Administrative Assistant**

\*All staff information effective through 12/31/23

## MISSION

To strengthen the community by creating economic vitality through tourism and unique visitor experiences.

## VISION

To enhance Pine Bluff's position in the tourism industry by promoting and developing the city as a travel destination that provides culturally rich, diverse, and inclusive experiences.

## MESSAGE FROM THE

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with a sense of both satisfaction and accomplishment that I present the 2023 annual report for the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission and Explore Pine Bluff. This year, a journey dotted with ambition and resilience stands as a testament to our goal of rejuvenating the tourism industry in Pine Bluff.

Through new marketing strategies, we continue our work to elevate Pine Bluff's profile as a tourist destination. Our campaigns, intended to showcase the unique cultural, historical, and recreational experiences our area offers, resonate deeply with visitors and locals alike.

Our commitment to enhancing and developing our tourism assets remains our primary goal. We continue to work on measures that foster cultural preservation, community enrichment, and authentic visitor experiences. This holistic approach toward tourism development provides a solid foundation for sustainable tourism. Community enrichment initiatives prioritize the well-being and em-

powerment of residents, fostering a sense of pride and ownership in our tourism offerings. Through authentic visitor experiences, we are striving to provide meaningful interactions that showcase our community's true essence that encourages repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Collaborations and new partnerships have been instrumental in our journey this year. We've forged strong alliances with influential industry stakeholders, both at the regional and national levels. These valuable partnerships will allow us to expand our reach and diversify our offerings. By leveraging our collective strengths and expertise, we can explore new avenues that will cater to the interests and preferences of our target audiences.

As I reflect on the progress outlined within the pages of this annual report, I am reminded of the strength and resilience that embodies our organization. As the executive director, I am honored to acknowledge the unwavering dedication and the extraordinary contributions made by our small but mighty team. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Betty Brown and Jimmy Cunningham, whose passion and perseverance have not only been exemplary but is also the very foundation of our success.

I would also like to thank our supporters whose confidence in our vision has been vital in this undertaking. Your trust and confidence in our goals have provided the motivation and encouragement needed to forge ahead, and your continued support has allowed us to push boundaries and explore new opportunities.

As we look to the future, the road ahead is bright with promise. With our steadfast commitment to excellence, community engagement, and the fostering of a destination that celebrates diversity and heritage, we remain dedicated to crafting a future for Pine Bluff tourism that is as vibrant and dynamic as the community we serve.

Warmest regards,

Sheri Storie  
Executive Director

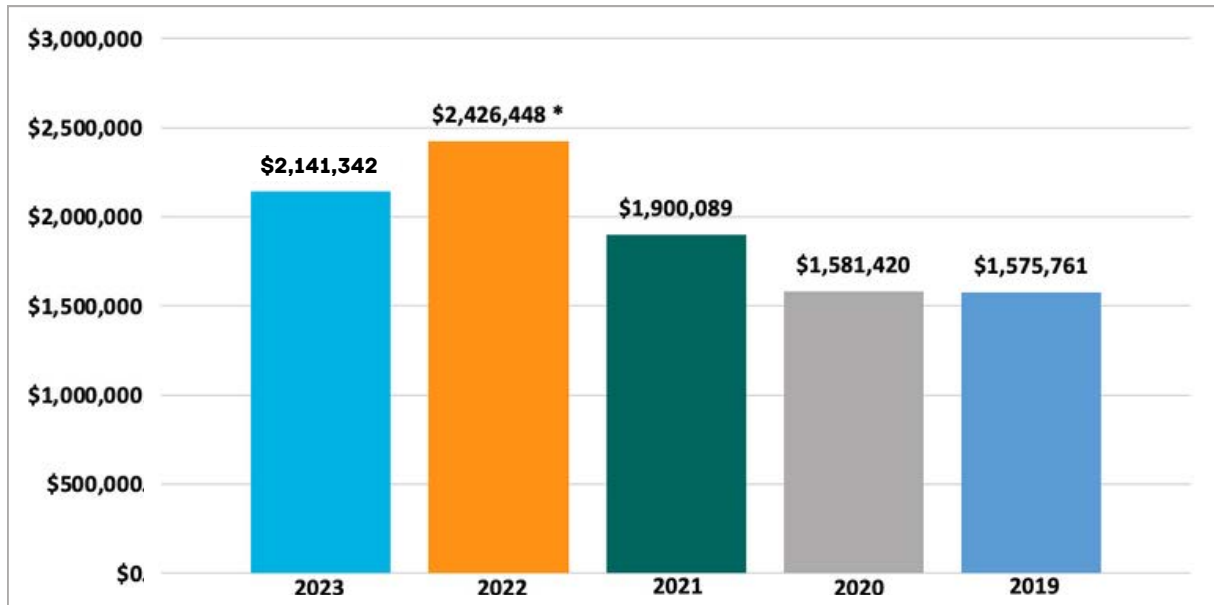




# A&P TAX COLLECTIONS

The Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission was created on December 19, 1977 by the Pine Bluff City Council. Currently, a 2% tax is collected by prepared food operators and a 3% tax is collected by hotels/motels for short-term lodging. This tax is then remitted to the A&P Commission to be used for advertising and promoting the city and its environs, or for the construction, reconstruction, extension, equipment, improvement, maintenance, repair and operation of a convention center, or for the operation of tourism promotion facilities in the city, or for supporting , or otherwise pertaining to, a convention center, for funding of the arts, or the operation of theme parks, family entertainment facilities, or other tourist-oriented facilities as determined by the advertising and promotion commission not inconsistent with Arkansas enabling statues.

## TOTAL TAX COLLECTIONS 2019-2023



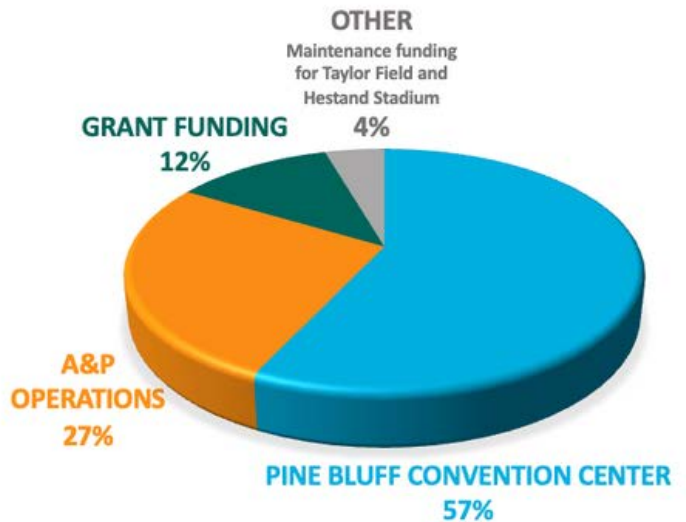
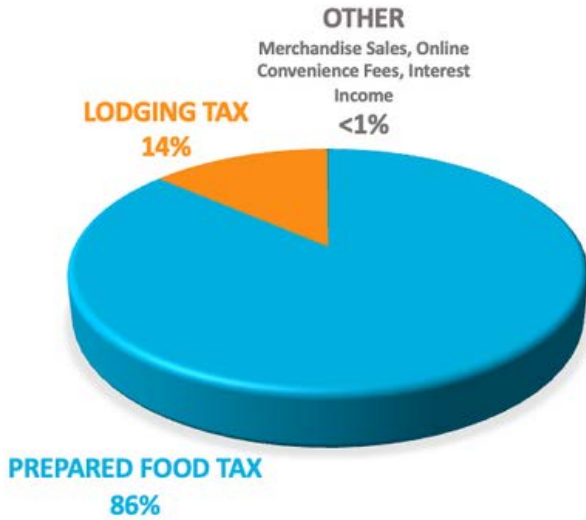
*\*2022 total includes a one-time payment of \$444,342 and should not be expected in future years.*

8% Increase over 2022 collections (excluding one-time payment referenced above.)

# REVENUE & EXPENDITURES

**2023 TOTAL REVENUE**  
**\$2,142,628**

**2023 TOTAL EXPENSES**  
**\$2,008,834**



## 2023 FUNDING RECIPIENTS

Year-Round Funding Recipients:	Amount Funded:
Arkansas Railroad Museum	\$20,000
Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas	\$45,000
Hestand Stadium	\$35,000
Taylor Field	\$45,000
<b>Advertising and Publicity Grant Recipients:</b>	
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff - Homecoming	\$12,000
<b>Event Funding Recipients:</b>	
Black Pilots of America - Operation Skyhook	\$10,000
Corvette Brothers of Pine Bluff - Jabberwock	\$5,000
Delta Rivers Nature Center - Wetlands & Wildlife Festival	\$2,000
Jefferson County Extension Homemakers - SE AR District Fair	\$10,825
King Cotton Holiday Classic	\$11,245
Pine Bluff Festival Association - 4th of July Celebration	\$10,000
Pine Bluff Festival Association - Enchanted Land of Lights & Legends	\$10,000
Sahara Shrine Circus	\$20,000
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff - Alumni Golf Tournament	\$2,500
<b>TOTAL GRANT FUNDING</b>	<b>\$238,570</b>
<b>Maintenance Funding:</b>	
Hestand Stadium	\$35,000
Taylor Field	\$55,000
<b>TOTAL MAINTENANCE FUNDING</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>
<b>Pine Bluff Convention Center Funding:</b>	
Monthly Operating Allocation	\$1,019,590
Bond Principal & Interest	\$108,410
Maintenance Funding	\$16,500
<b>TOTAL PINE BLUFF CONVENTION CENTER FUNDING</b>	<b>\$1,144,500</b>



# BALANCE SHEET

**AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023 (Unaudited Financial Statement)**

## ASSETS

### Current Assets

Cash on Hand	50.00
Cash in Bank - Relyance	1,471,433.39
Cash in Bank - Relyance-TDP	189,037.46

**Total Current Assets** **1,660,520.85**

### Property and Equipment

Lease Asset	62,381.00
Accumulated Amortization	(15,595.00)

**Total Property and Equipment** **46,786.00**

**Total Other Assets** **0.00**

## TOTAL ASSETS

**\$1,707,306.85**

## LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE

### Current Liabilities

FIT Withheld	949.64
FICA/MC Withheld	915.08
FICA/MC Match	80.98
SIT Withheld	640.02
AR Sales Tax	(13.00)
Accrued Compensated Absences	16,437.00
Lease Liability	49,306.00

**Total Current Liabilities** **68,315.72**

**Total Long-Term Liabilities** **0.00**

### Fund Balance

Fund Balance Beginning	1,505,197.02
Current Period Inc (Dec)	133,794.11

**Total Fund Balance** **1,638,991.13**

## TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCE

**\$1,707,306.85**



# MARKETING

In working with the Arkansas' Land of Legends Regional Travel Association and Arkansas Tourism, the A&P Commission was able to receive a value of more than \$83,000 in advertising and marketing to promote Pine Bluff as a tourist destination, while only spending \$30,500. This allowed for a total of \$150,000 in advertising value with our \$100,000 advertising budget. The following are some co-op advertisements achieved with the ARLOL/Arkansas Tourism collaboration.

## ARKANSAS TRAVEL GUIDE

The Arkansas Travel Guide is the most comprehensive tourism publication produced in The Natural State and one of the smartest, most effective ways to market businesses to target audiences. With 300,000 copies circulated through a sophisticated distribution plan, the visually stunning printed piece remains in high demand among in-state and out-of-state readers year-round, and the interactive version offers unlimited online exposure.



## ARKANSAS OUTDOOR ADVENTURE GUIDE

The Arkansas Outdoor Adventure Guide showcases the beauty of the state, as well as the top things to see and do in the great outdoors. Large, captivating photographs and concise, inviting editorial copy draws readers in and beckons them outside. The focus of the publication is quintessential Arkansas experiences on lakes and rivers, as well as in scenic woodlands.



MEREDITH WOMEN'S NETWORK is one of the largest digital and print publishers in the U.S. including brands in the food and drink, home and garden, travel and entertainment sectors. This campaign targeted adults ages 25-54 who are interested in arts, culture, female-oriented content and general travel within Arkansas and its surrounding states.



## PANDORA

PANDORA This four-week campaign achieved more than 470,000 audio impressions geared toward adults ages 25-54 and targeted travel and outdoor enthusiasts in Arkansas and its surrounding states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.



## CARBON MEDIA

CARBON MEDIA owns and operates websites, mobile apps and video endpoints with the goal of informing, entertaining and empowering outdoor and adventure enthusiasts. Content includes boating, fishing, backpacking, cycling, and kayaking. With this partnership, we received co-branded banner ads and a co-branded :15 video spot with Arkansas Tourism.

# MARKETING (CONTINUED)

## ARKANSAS.COM E-NEWSLETTERS

Arkansas.com e-newsletters allowed us to reach Arkansas Tourism’s highly engaged database driving visits to our website. Custom e-newsletters were sent in February, May, and August. Additional placements were included in the Discover Arkansas e-newsletters in April, June, July, November, and December. This e-newsletter reaches an engaged and active travel-planning audience. Every month, subscribers are inspired with rich stories showcasing what to see and do in Arkansas.



© Arkansas' Land of Legends

From bustling lakes and vibrant parks to lazy bays and peaceful walking trails, Pine Bluff has plenty of ways to enjoy the outdoors. Choose from a whopping 19 parks, two major lakes and some of the most popular waterways in the country to make the city your playground.



## SPONSORED ARTICLE

Leveraging the expertise of the Arkansas Travel editorial team, a custom, experiential article was crafted for our destination. The article is featured on Arkansas.com for one year. We also own the content for our marketing use indefinitely. The article will continue to be promoted through the articles vault on Arkansas.com and through their house ad inventory.

## LEAD GENERATION

When Arkansas.com site visitors sign up to receive information from the state, they can request to receive information directly from Pine Bluff and the Arkansas’ Land of Legends Regional Travel Association. Upon requesting information, visitors receive an immediate, auto-generated email written by our organization. We then receive electronic leads on a weekly basis. This program not only grows our database with qualified visitor leads, it also drives traffic to our website.



### AN AFFORDABLE GETAWAY FOR NEW FAMILY TRADITIONS

#### ARKANSAS' LAND OF LEGENDS TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Arkansas is your destination for affordable getaways with everything you need to start a new tradition. With an abundance of natural assets accessible year-round, we're a natural choice for family adventures. Ready to start on those memories? Make Pine Bluff and Arkansas' Land of Legends your destination for camping, fishing, hiking or biking, kayaking & more.

## TBA OF ARKANSAS

Television advertising was made possible through our partnership with Arkansas Tourism and ARLOL on the following stations: KARK/KARZ; KATV; KTHV; KLRT/KASN; KAIT – NE Arkansas & Southeast Missouri; KNWA/KFTA – NW Arkansas & Arkansas River Valley; KHBS/KHOG – Fort Smith/Fayetteville.





# MARKETING (CONTINUED)

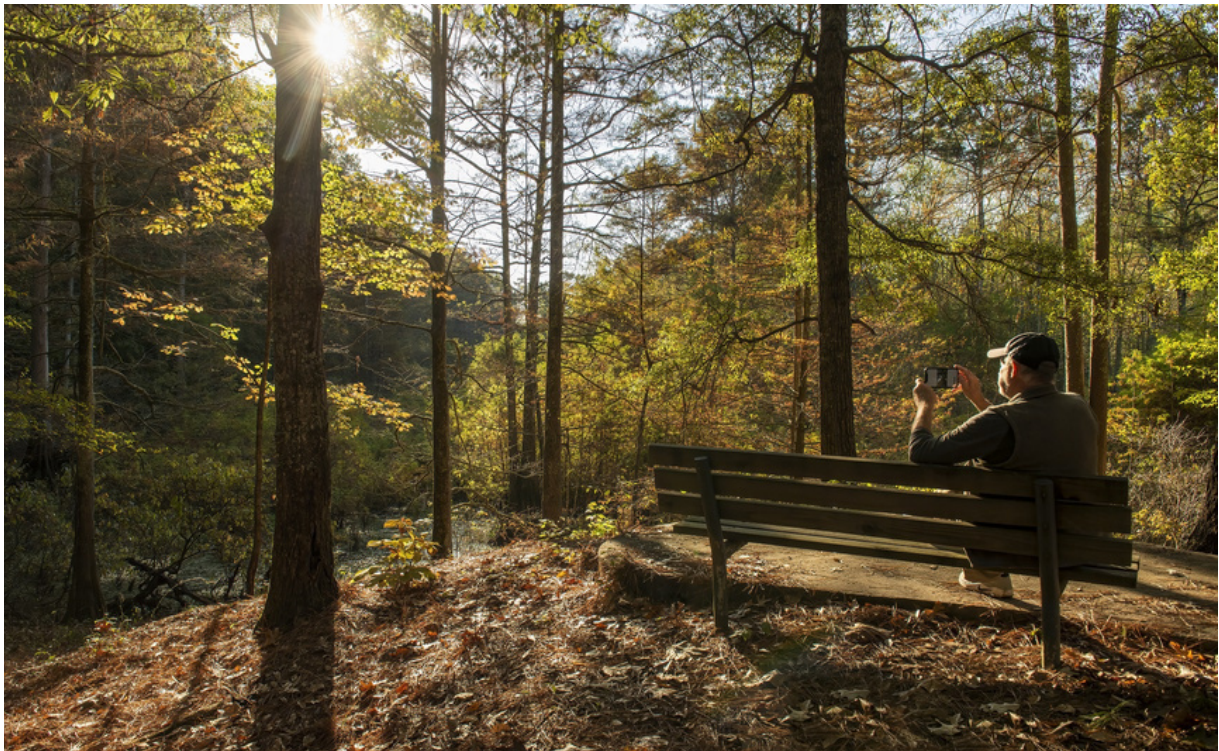
**Additional print and radio advertising, as well as promotion on our social media channels, were placed to help promote Pine Bluff and events in 2023:**

**PRINT:**

- AY Magazine Spring Travel Issue
- Arkansas Times Road Trip Issue
- Arkansas Land of Legends Visitors Guide
- Arkansas Love Where You Live
- Delta Family Adventure Brochure
- Carl A. Redus Aquatic Center Brochure
- Martha Mitchell Home & Museum Brochure
- King Biscuit Blues Festival Tabloid (promoting Port City Blues Society events)

**RADIO:**

- Cumulus Media – Tour de Bluff, Jabberwock, UAPB Homecoming, Catfish Fridays Blues & Soul Nights; King Cotton Holiday Classic Basketball Tournament, Pine Bluff Takeover Black Rodeo
- Deltaplex Radio – 5A State Basketball Tournament; Tour de Bluff; Jabberwock; King Cotton Holiday Classic Basketball Tournament, Pine Bluff Takeover Black Rodeo





# MARKETING (CONTINUED)

## 2022 COMPARED TO 2021

### PRINTED COLLATERAL

 **2,425** ↑ 90%  
NUMBER OF BROCHURES sent to welcome centers

 **3,303** ↑ 128%  
NUMBER OF WELCOME PACKETS for groups meeting in/representing Pine Bluff

 **1,447** ↓ 29%  
DIRECT MAIL PIECES SENT (included partnership with Land of Legends)

### WEBSITE TRAFFIC OVERVIEW

 **34,565** ↑ 29%  
WEBSITE VISITS/SESSIONS

 **59,691** ↑ 25%  
PAGE VIEWS

 **27,131** ↑ 31%  
UNIQUE VISITORS

 **4 MIN 34 SEC** ↓ 41%  
AVG. SESSION DURATION

### WEBSITE TRAFFIC BY DEVICE

 **22,603** ↑ 32%  
MOBILE

 **11,499** ↑ 25%  
DESKTOP

 **467** ↑ 8%  
TABLET

### SOCIAL CHANNELS

 **5,260** ↑ 5%  
FACEBOOK FANS

 **362** ↑ 8%  
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

## BLOG ANALYTICS

### TOP TRAFFIC SOURCES

 **7,327** ↑ 93%  
GOOGLE

 **2,454** ↑ 13%  
DIRECT

 **1,898** ↑ 181%  
UNKNOWN

 **1,212** ↑ 61%  
FACEBOOK

 **765** ↑ 21%  
INTERNAL PAGES

 **14,552** ↑ 25%  
POST VIEWS (# OF TIMES POSTS WERE SEEN)

 **9,320** ↑ 31%  
VISITORS (# OF PEOPLE WHO VISITED THE BLOG PAGE)

### Top 25 Blog Views from ExplorePineBluff.com

	BLOG TITLE	PUBLISH DATE	POST VIEWS
1	The Back to Africa Movement	7/13/22	683
2	John Horse and the Black Seminoles: The Race to Freedom	2/16/22	605
3	Monte Coleman	2/1/23	469
4	The Short Life of Little Bobby Hutton	4/21/21	387
5	Pine Bluff Lynchings of 1892	2/10/21	367
6	The Golden Thirteen	8/24/22	334
7	October 14 Annular Eclipse 2023	6/7/23	313
8	Juliet Jackson: Pine Bluff Basketball Phenom	8/9/23	295
9	Dexter Harding's Sawdust Bridge	7/7/21	294
10	Wild Bill Hickok: A Gunslinging Legend of the Wild West	4/6/22	289
11	Bobby El Charro Negro Butler	6/8/22	265
12	UFO Sightings in Arkansas	9/28/22	259
13	John Rust & His Mechanical Cotton Picker	8/17/22	257
14	Willie Roaf	2/15/23	237
15	Karen Wolfe the Princess of Soul and Blues	8/26/20	230
16	End of the Line: The 1987 Movie partly filmed in Pine Bluff	11/2/22	225
17	The Fascinating History of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	9/2/20	218
18	What Do You Know about the WPA Slave Narratives?	2/3/21	207
19	April 8 2024 Solar Eclipse Trivia	4/5/23	182
20	Martha Beall Mitchell: A Pine Bluff Original	5/27/20	174
21	Arkansas's Great North American Eclipse 2024	1/25/23	172
22	Black Pilots of America Return to Pine Bluff Arkansas for Operation Skyhook	5/17/23	168
23	Remembering Taylor Field	7/22/20	154
24	The History of the Pine Bluff Arsenal	10/11/23	148
25	Southeast Arkansas College Joins the National Junior College Athletic Association	3/29/23	145

# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Our three major focus areas in tourism development during 2023 were the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Cultural District, research, and placemaking. Research and placemaking are imperative to the success of the Cultural District and are also areas of focus that have not had a prominent place in A&P's responsibility of growing tourism.

Acknowledging the interconnected nature of these areas highlights an integrated approach to tourism development. The Delta Rhythm & Bayous Cultural District serves as a centerpiece for cultural and historical expression, drawing on the region's rich history to attract visitors. By concentrating on research, particularly location analytics and tourism trends, decision-makers are gaining deeper insights into visitor behavior and preferences. This data-driven approach can inform more effective marketing strategies and identify potential areas for strategic development.

Meanwhile, placemaking initiatives are integral to this equation, as they involve transforming public spaces to strengthen the community's connection to its locale, thereby enhancing the overall appeal to both residents and tourists. Effective placemaking creates engaging environments that tell a story and evoke a sense of belonging, ultimately contributing to the region's cultural allure.

## DELTA RHYTHM & BAYOUS CULTURAL DISTRICT

The plans and development for Phase I of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Cultural District continue to advance. While the 2023 committed funds for this project were not transferred to the Economic & Community Development office until August 2023, work continued until that time so we could progress as soon as the funds were received. This positive momentum is indicative of the commitment to cultural enrichment in the community. With a portion of the committed \$2 million securely in place, the roadmap for the Delta Rhythm & Bayous



Cultural District's first phase can be more thoroughly executed. The appointment of a Cultural Development Specialist in August 2023 marks a strategic move to ensure that the unique narratives and tourism offerings in Pine Bluff are meticulously evaluated and enhanced. This role is key in identifying opportunities for growth and facilitating partnerships that can broaden the impact of the district.

A first for Pine Bluff happened when community leaders from Pine Bluff and Greenville, MS met in December 2023 to discuss the regional planning for the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Highway that extends from US. Highway 65 in Pine Bluff to U.S. Highway 82 in Greenville. Both cities will serve as anchors for the DRB Highway that will also highlight the cities of Gould, Dumas, Dermott, McGehee, Lake Village, Leland, and Indianola. This project goes hand-in-hand with the development of Pine Bluff's cultural heritage tourism initiative as it will highlight music, arts, and bayou history.



# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

## RESEARCH

Research in tourism development is indeed imperative as it provides the necessary foundation for informed decision-making and strategic planning. This was exemplified by the economic impact study performed on the Cultural District that was released in November 2022. This report confirmed that the Cultural District, once developed, will have a positive economic impact on both the city and county.

To continue with the much-needed research to ensure informed decisions are being made throughout the development of our tourism assets, the A&P Commission subscribed to Placer.ai to have access to data otherwise unavailable. The benefits of using Placer.ai are numerous. Placer.ai is a location analytics platform that provides insights into consumer behavior, foot traffic patterns, and market trends. Here are some specific benefits it offers for the tourism industry:

- **Visitor Demographics:** Placer.ai provides valuable information about the demographics of visitors to a particular area. This includes age groups, gender distribution, and even income levels. Such insights help tourism businesses tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to better cater to their target audience.
- **Foot Traffic Analysis:** By analyzing foot traffic, we can reveal peak visitation times, popular areas within a destination, and visitor flow patterns. This information is vital for optimizing resource allocation and improving the overall visitor experience.
- **Competitor Insights:** We can now understand our competitive landscape by tracking foot traffic in competitor destinations and attractions. This allows for benchmarking and the identification of strengths and weaknesses in comparison to others in the industry.
- **Performance Evaluation:** By correlating foot traffic data with advertising efforts, we can measure the impact of our strategies and make data-driven decisions to optimize our marketing budget.

## HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The role of historical research in identifying the city's rich narratives is of critical importance and represents an ongoing process. The Director of Tourism Development constantly reviews primary and secondary sources including newspapers, scholarly journals, biographies, dissertations, diaries, interviews, government documents, correspondence, oral histories, statistical data, works of art, and other materials.

The use of such information is crucial in helping to enhance the uniqueness of visitor experiences. For example, the unifying historical themes which now define the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Cultural District Plan were identified from intensive historical research. The locations of important buildings which will be memorialized in the district's design came about through this process. The multi-layered stories culled

from research which abound in civil rights, the Civil War, music, the cotton industry, and cinema will be incorporated into art and signage in the district's placemaking plans. Currently, such research has also guided the development of the Explore Pine Bluff Blog, providing it with dynamic content to familiarize viewers with the varied narratives of the city. It should be noted that this blog is often reprinted in several Arkansas publications, thus exposing these research-derived stories to an even larger audience.



# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

## PLACEMAKING

In our work with Project for Public Spaces (PPS), the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission has embarked on an extraordinary mission to develop the unique destination of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Cultural District in downtown Pine Bluff. As the Cultural District blossoms into a prominent tourist hub, the principles of placemaking will be instrumental in crafting a network of diverse destinations, each offering something different for people to experience. Embracing the concept of the Power of 10, we will be crafting an exceptional visitor journey, envisioning multiple distinct places, each with a number of sub-spaces featuring various things to do and interact with.

The concept of placemaking allows a destination to develop the following:

- **Create Engaging Spaces:** Transforming public spaces and enhancing community interaction by ensuring they are vibrant and inviting, can attract tourists and heighten their experience.
- **Cultural Development:** Celebrating and showcasing our local art, music, traditions, and culinary experiences can create unique tourist attractions that reflect the identity of the place.
- **Infrastructure Development:** By building or improving infrastructure such as parks, museums, and trails we can make them more appealing and accessible to visitors.
- **Event Programming:** Organizing events such as festivals, markets, or performances can attract both locals and tourists, contributing to a lively atmosphere.
- **Wayfinding and Signage:** Developing clear and informative signage can help tourists navigate and discover attractions, services, and historical elements of the area.

Creating a synergy between research and placemaking can ensure that development initiatives are not only data-driven and targeted but also physically embodied in the space, making for a more appealing and cohesive tourist experience. Continuously engaging with the local community and stakeholders during this process is also essential to ensure that tourism development aligns with local values and contributes to the community's well-being.

## MOSAIC MURAL

Ongoing discussions throughout the year with the UAPB Art and Design Department Chair and Associate Professor, Dr. Karen Dejarnette, yielded the idea of creating the first placemaking project for the Cultural District. In honor of the Old Miller Theater, which sits directly across from the proposed Blues and Wellness Plaza and is one of about 10 remaining African American-owned vaudeville theaters in the country, Dr. Dejarnette suggested the creation of a mosaic mural. It was also decided that the design would honor the Black Swan Records tour of 1922 which brought blues star, Ethel Waters, to the Old Miller Theater. Further, there was agreement to include Pine Bluff residents in the mosaic who were key players with Black Swan Records, the first major black record company in the United States.

An intensive effort including over 800 hours of labor by students and faculty yielded in December 2023 a beautiful 30' x 5' mosaic mural. This work was initially shown to attendees of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Highway workshop and was received with much praise. A week later it was unveiled to the general public where it was enthusiastically met with approval. Since that time, it has been on display at The ARTSpace where visitors from all over the city and the region have been able to view it. While its exact placement in the district is still not yet determined, there is no question that it will adorn a space there.

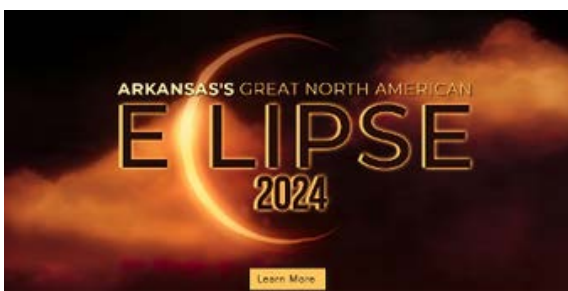
Acknowledgement of the phenomenal leadership that Dr. Dejarnette has shown in this effort is in order, along with many thanks for the vital support of George Cotton, Sr., Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement. The Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission looks forward to the many future placemaking projects that UAPB students and faculty will provide in the Cultural District.



Ethel Waters is honored in one section of the 30' x 5' mosaic mural highlighting the importance of the Old Miller Theater.

# LOOKING AHEAD

The information below serves as a preview of the exciting projects that lie ahead for our team in 2024. While it is important to note that the following list is not an exhaustive compilation of all our endeavors, it does offer a glimpse into the remarkable initiatives we’re poised to undertake. As our team embarks on this transformative year, we anticipate taking on a myriad of diverse and ambitious projects that will shape our trajectory and propel us towards success.



The Great North American Eclipse is going to be our main focus for Q1 2024. During 2023, organizations started planning events for this historic event which will take place on Monday, April 8. Arkansas is expected to welcome 1.5 million visitors from outside the state and is estimated to be the largest tourism event in Arkansas history. As plans are finalized for the weekend of events scheduled from April 5-8, marketing strategies are being put in place to promote all events as a package.



The Discover Our Delta Festival will join forces in 2024 with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Arts & Culture Festival scheduled for June 2024 to coincide with Black Music Month and Juneteenth. With support to UAPB from A&P’s grant funding and our tourism development budget, the alignment of these festivals will be a two-day family-friendly event designed to bring people together by celebrating music, visual, literary, and culinary arts. The festival will also educate audiences on UAPB and the Delta’s rich arts and cultural legacy.



For the first time in over 20 years, Pine Bluff will have a re-designed and enlarged (magazine size) Visitors Guide with new content to assist in promoting Pine Bluff as a tourist destination. This guide is produced through the Arkansas’ Land of Legends Travel Association, and A&P will play a major role in the design and content. This new guide will align with current Arkansas Tourism research and consumer trends and will inspire travel through engaging editorial content that highlights various visitor experiences and large format photography.



After a hiatus started by COVID, Catfish Friday Blues & Soul Nights re-started late in 2023, and ended the year with an amazing performance by D.K. Harrell. We are proud to announce that this popular and enjoyable live music event will be held monthly in 2024. This music series takes place at the UAPB Incubator and a food truck is on-site at every event selling fried catfish, among other savory treats. The lineup for 2024 will be announced soon



# LOOKING AHEAD (CONTINUED)

## DELTA RHYTHM & BAYOUS CULTURAL DISTRICT

Strategic planning and oversight are ongoing as the work ensues to bring the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Cultural District to fruition. The Economic & Community Development office is making progress with the land acquisition, so it is expected that the first component of Phase I, the Blues & Wellness Plaza, will break ground in the first half of 2024. Concurrently, E&CD will continue its work to acquire the remaining properties.

While the basic framework for the Blues & Wellness Plaza has been established, a review of recommendations by PPS will be considered to meet the needs of both visitors and residents more effectively. Details related to landscaping, amenities, placemaking, and other areas will be reviewed for potential modifications. Additional 3-D renderings capturing newly incorporated elements will be completed by an illustrator to provide the general public, policy makers, and funders with a more accurate visual representation of the venues as modifications are made.

Further, efforts continue to identify additional funding to complete the Blues & Wellness Plaza. With a major increase in the footprint of this project since its inception, along with new amenities added, securing the grant support to supplement the City's funding allocation is critical. To this end, the A&P office is engaging major funders around the country to solicit program support. The recent appointment of our Director of Tourism Development to the board of the Mid-America Arts Alliance has already yielded some promising relationships within the national foundation community.

Finally, the collaboration with the Pine Bluff/Jefferson County National Heritage Trails Task Force will yield additional support for the district. Several properties which have historical significance are currently not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Task Force will be working to help facilitate this process by identifying these properties and initiating applications. And while much effort is being undertaken to develop the Blues & Wellness Plaza, the Task Force is responsible for planning other phases of the district's development. Of particular note is the development of a strategy to create a national park highlighting enslaved resistance on the peninsula in Regional Park. Long term projects such as these need the shepherding that the Task Force will provide.





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