

Pulse of Conway

THE PREMIER SOURCE FOR BUSINESS NEWS IN THE NORTH METRO REGION



KPIs: The Numbers Every Business Owner Should Know

Running a business without tracking the right numbers is a lot like driving with your eyes closed. You might make it a little way on instinct, but sooner or later, you're bound to crash. That's why key performance indicators, or KPIs, are so powerful.

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SEPTEMBER 2025

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PRESENTED BY  FAB&T

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STRENGTHENS CONWAY



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TIM INGRAM
PAINTING FOREMAN
UCA PHYSICAL PLANT

BLUE-RIBBON WORKFORCE
AWARD HONOREE



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS™

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Pulse of Conway

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CONWAY REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Conway Regional congratulates
James Davidson
for being awarded the
**BLUE RIBBON WORKFORCE AWARD,
INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY**



CONWAY REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Conway Regional congratulates
Paul Mauldin
for being awarded the
**BLUE RIBBON WORKFORCE AWARD,
SKILLED TRADES**

To the heroes that power our community, Thank you!

CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of the Blue Ribbon Workforce Awards!

These individuals and organizations represent more than our local workforce. They represent the heart of our community – keeping Conway and all of Faulkner County safe, strong and thriving.

We're honored to be the banking partner of many of this year's outstanding winners.



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PROUD TO SUPPORT THIS YEAR'S WINNERS

Every day, thousands go to work in Conway across any number of industries that are vital to our community as a whole. Many times, that work goes unnoticed. American Safeguard Insurance is proud to sponsor the Blue Ribbon Workforce Awards and bring light to some of our community's hardest-working individuals and companies.

**Congratulations to this year's winners!
Thanks for all you do for Conway!**



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This year marks the second annual American Safeguard Insurance Blue Ribbon Workforce Awards, presented by First Arkansas Bank & Trust. The awards were created to spotlight people whose work often goes unnoticed but whose contributions are essential to Conway's growth and success.

Our honorees represent a wide variety of careers. They include individuals in agriculture, construction, skilled trades, industrial supply, manufacturing, and utilities. Some are relatively new to Conway, others have made this city their home for decades, and a few have been here their entire lives. Each person brings a unique story, but they are united by a commitment to their work and to the community.

The Blue Ribbon Workforce Awards highlight more than job titles. They shine a light on the men and women who help keep Conway moving forward in ways both large and small. Their efforts may not always be visible, but they are critical to the quality of life our community enjoys. They build and maintain the structures around us, provide the goods and services we depend on, and support the industries that anchor our economy.

The awards also serve as a reminder that progress in Conway does not rest only on the shoulders of high-profile leaders or organizations. It comes from the steady, day-to-day work of individuals who care deeply about their craft and their city. The honorees you will read about in the following pages embody that spirit.

We are proud to celebrate them, to share their stories, and to recognize the difference they make. The second year of the Blue Ribbon Workforce Awards continues the tradition of honoring the people whose work sustains and strengthens Conway.

Lee Hogan
Editor of Conway Publications

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

HILL CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Hill Construction Management, LLC has spent the past decade building homes across central Arkansas, known for creating structures that balance beauty, functionality and lasting value. The company works closely with clients to design and build residences that reflect individual style, managing each project with precision from start to finish.

Owners Brittany and David Hill bring complementary strengths to the business. Brittany, who serves as president, leads customers through the design process and handles project administration. David, vice president, manages jobsites and coordinates subcontractors to ensure every detail meets the company's high standards.

The foundation of the business runs deeper than its 10 years in operation. Brittany grew up building homes alongside her father, gaining hands-on experience and an appreciation for quality craftsmanship. Today, that legacy continues through Hill Construction Management's dedication to thoughtful design and customer-focused service.

With a reputation for delivering homes that families are proud to own, the company takes pride in shaping communities across the region with projects that combine skill, creativity and enduring value.



AGRICULTURE

TIM WHITE
NativState

Tim White serves as vice president of forestry at NativState, where he oversees forest management, inventory, monitoring and compliance across 550,000 acres. He has held the role since the company's founding in 2021.

A native of Russellville, White earned a bachelor's degree in forestry and wildlife management from the University of Arkansas at Monticello in 1981. He has been a registered forester since that same year and was recognized as the Society of American Foresters Outstanding Field Forester in 2024.

White said one of the highlights of his role is the people he works with, from small forest landowners to the NativState team. He joined the business at the encouragement of founder Stuart Allen, who challenged him to help create a new company in a new industry that benefits Arkansas landowners and the broader mid-South region.

He has made Conway his home, drawn by its growth, talent and pro-business culture. Outside of his work at NativState, White lends his support to Toad Suck Daze, the largest family festival in the state.



BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

TriTECHNE



Founded in 2015 and based in Conway, Arkansas, TriTechne delivers end-to-end services for building, expanding, and maintaining telecommunications networks. The company partners with utility owners and telecom providers to create solutions tailored to each project's specific requirements.

TriTechne supports both wireline and wireless networks, providing expertise in planning, site acquisition, engineering, construction, fiber splicing, and network testing. Its teams use structured processes to streamline work and adapt solutions to the distinct challenges of every project, helping clients achieve operational goals efficiently.

Led by a team with more than 50 years of combined industry experience, TriTechne applies deep program knowledge to guide projects and solve real-time challenges. This practical approach ensures results-driven support at every stage.

Collaboration and quality are central to the company's operations. By combining technical skill with hands-on project management, TriTechne helps clients navigate the complexities of network development and expansion. Its focus on customized solutions positions the company as a trusted partner in delivering effective, reliable telecommunications infrastructure.



INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY

JAMES DAVIDSON
Conway Regional Health System

James Davidson has served as director of materials management at Conway Regional Health System for seven years, overseeing the health system's entire supply chain. He and his team manage the ordering, receiving, and distribution of all materials essential to hospital operations, ensuring smooth day-to-day functions across the organization.

Davidson's career in healthcare began in 1999, shortly after graduating from high school. Starting in environmental services while taking night classes in computer science at ITT Tech, he eventually transitioned to supply chain

management. Over the years, he advanced through roles including supply technician, shift leader, project manager, inventory control coordinator, and operations manager before assuming his current leadership position.

A native of Solgohachia, Arkansas, Davidson chose Conway for its sense of community, strong schools, and the collaborative environment at Conway Regional. He values the hospital's mission, vision, and core values, along with the dedication of his colleagues. He has also contributed to the community as a former AAU basketball coach for the Conway Bears, mentoring young athletes and supporting local youth development.

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

YE OLDE CHIMNEY SWEEPE

Ye Olde Chimney Sweepe was founded in 1978 and has grown into a full-service fireplace, chimney, and dryer vent company. Damon Reed purchased the business in 1997 and has owned it for 28 years, guiding its growth from a modest garage operation into a company with multiple service vehicles, lead technicians, assistant techs, and office staff.

Based in Conway, the company specializes in chimney inspections, sweeps, repairs, installations, dryer vent cleaning, and maintenance of wood-burning appliances. Its mission is to provide high-quality service while following industry codes and safety standards, paired with clear and honest communication with customers and employees.

The company emphasizes building a team of skilled professionals, mentoring employees, and creating a workplace that is both fun and rewarding. It takes satisfaction in helping families enjoy their fireplaces after a project is complete, often through photos customers share of their first fire following a repair or upgrade.

Rooted in Conway, Ye Olde Chimney Sweepe combines technical expertise, customer care, and community involvement to ensure homes are safe, warm, and welcoming.



MANUFACTURING

ALLISON HUNT
Virco Manufacturing

As Corporate Fleet Manager and Senior Manufacturing Operations Specialist at Virco Manufacturing, Allison Hunt wears many hats to support the company's operations. In her role, she manages Virco's leased vehicle fleet, nationwide, from ordering to maintenance while also coordinating training programs, recruiting interns, and facilitating internal and external plant tours. She oversees large purchases for the vice president and general manager, organizes employee appreciation events, and represents Virco at career fairs and community events.

Her career with the company began five years ago as an administrative assistant. Through dedication and initiative, Hunt advanced through multiple positions before reaching her current dual role. She says her greatest motivation comes from the

people she works alongside each day. "I do it for the smiles," she said, noting how rewarding it is to see colleagues thrive after a successful training or event.

Originally from Greenbrier, Hunt has called Conway home since childhood. She actively supports local nonprofits and donates to charitable organizations, while also representing Virco at Conway Area Chamber of Commerce events. Her commitment to service reflects her dedication to both her company and her community.



CONSTRUCTION

JASON DYESS

B&A Property Maintenance

Jason Dyess has spent the past seven years building a career defined by reliability and results at B&A Property Maintenance. As manager of Central Arkansas maintenance, Dyess oversees contract obligations across the region, ensuring projects are completed safely and on schedule. Before stepping into his current role, he worked as both supervisor and superintendent, gaining firsthand experience in the daily demands of property maintenance.

Dyess values the tangible side of his work — seeing progress take shape rather than tracking numbers on a page. His dedication has earned him recognition, including the prestigious Anchor Award at B&A, as well as honors from OSHA and the Arkansas Plant Board.

A Conway resident, Dyess first came to the city to attend the University of Central Arkansas, where he laid the foundation for his professional and personal life. Outside of work, he gives back to the community as a volleyball official and coach. For Dyess, the job is about more than maintenance — it's about service, teamwork, and building spaces people can rely on.



CONSTRUCTION

JEREMY & NICOLE KING

Olive Branch Landscape Management

Nicole and Jeremy King lead Olive Branch Landscape Management, where they combine professional expertise with a mission rooted in faith. Nicole serves as president and chief financial officer, overseeing finances and processes, while Jeremy is vice president and chief operating officer, guiding daily operations and long-term vision. Together, they have grown the business since its founding in 2019.

For the Kings, landscaping is about more than creating beautiful spaces. Their company provides opportunities for individuals coming out of rehab or prison, offering them a chance to rebuild their lives through meaningful work. They say watching employees gain confidence, develop skills and

grow in their faith is one of the most rewarding parts of their work.

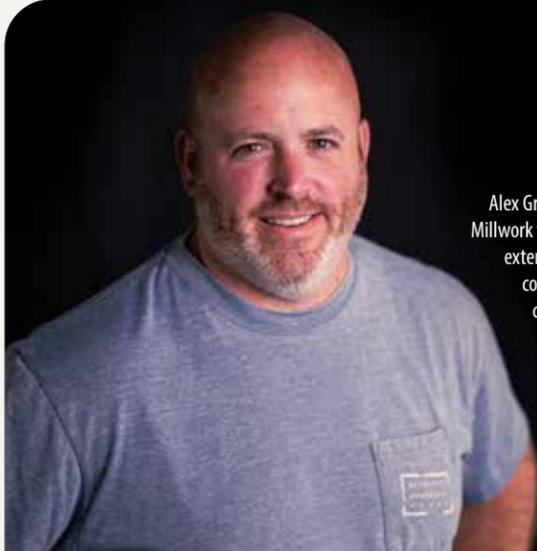
The couple moved from California to Conway in 2017, drawn by family ties and a strong sense that God was calling them to the community. Olive Branch now partners with the city to provide maintenance and beautification services. Recognized as an Arkansas Minority Woman Owned Business, the company has also earned honors from 501 LIFE Magazine and local community events.



CONSTRUCTION

ALEX GRANT

Grant's Cabinets and Millwork



Alex Grant has been a carpenter at Grant's Cabinets and Millwork for 16 years. During that time, he has gained extensive experience in custom cabinetry and millwork, contributing to the company's reputation for quality craftsmanship.

Grant's long tenure reflects his dedication and skill in carpentry. His work supports the company's mission of delivering custom solutions tailored to client needs, from design through installation.

Grant's years with the company highlighted his commitment to the

craft and to the team environment at Grant's Cabinets and Millwork. Through consistent effort and hands-on experience, he has helped maintain the company's standards for precision and quality in cabinetry and millwork projects.

As a seasoned carpenter, Alex Grant exemplifies the expertise and professionalism that define Grant's Cabinets and Millwork. His work continues to provide clients with durable, custom woodwork designed to enhance both form and function.

CONSTRUCTION

ZACH WATKINS

HD Roofing and Construction



Zach Watkins is the owner and president of HD Roofing and Construction, a company he founded in 2019. He oversees all aspects of the business, guiding a team built on professionalism, integrity, teamwork, and hard work. Watkins takes pride in turning visions into reality, fostering a culture where

employees feel respected and motivated to give their best. He describes the most rewarding part of his work as making a meaningful difference for both clients and the community. His leadership focuses on building trust, encouraging collaboration, and ensuring every project reflects the company's commitment to quality and reliability.

A native of Springdale, Watkins moved to Conway in 2013 to play football at the University of Central Arkansas. After living in larger cities following graduation, he returned to Conway with his wife, drawn by the city's sense of community and potential.

Beyond his work, Watkins is active in the Conway area, participating in the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce, One Church Conway, the UCA Purple Circle, and the Conway Regional Health Foundation. He emphasizes community engagement and values creating lasting relationships with clients and neighbors alike.

CONSTRUCTION

TIM INGRAM

University of Central Arkansas, Physical Plant

Tim Ingram is the painting foreman at the University of Central Arkansas Physical Plant, where he has worked for 38 years. Ingram assists maintenance staff with various tasks, focusing on painting projects assigned across the UCA campus.

He has held positions as an apprentice skilled worker and painter. Ingram says he enjoys working with people and helping take care of their painting needs on campus.

A native of Hamlet, a community in Conway, Arkansas, Ingram considers Conway his home. He earned a 12-year diploma and has spent decades contributing to the upkeep of UCA's facilities.

Through his work, Ingram helps ensure that campus buildings are well-maintained and painting projects are completed efficiently. His long tenure reflects his commitment to supporting the university's operations and serving the needs of staff and students.



CONSTRUCTION

DANNY WILLIAMS

Dreams & Visions Contracting and Consulting

Danny Williams is co-owner of Dreams & Visions Contracting & Consulting in Conway. He oversees project management, design, sales, and resource allocation, blending creativity with practical planning to help clients bring their projects to life.

A lifelong Conway native, Williams has stayed in the city for its strong community and access to the state's outdoor opportunities. His journey to his current role was shaped by life circumstances and the encouragement of others who recognized his potential.

Williams is deeply involved in the local business and civic community. He participates in the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce, the BNI networking group, and a range of

activities within the local faith community. His connections reflect both his commitment to Conway and his belief in collaboration.

Since joining Dreams & Visions more than two years ago, Williams has focused on combining innovation with efficient project management. His work emphasizes both creative and relational aspects of contracting and consulting. Through his efforts, he helps clients transform ideas into completed projects while fostering strong relationships within the local business community.



SKILLED TRADES

DAVID FREYALDENHOVEN

Husky Heating & Cooling

David Freyaldenhoven is the owner of Husky Heating & Cooling, where he oversees daily operations while also working in the field as a technician when needed. Since starting the business three years ago, he has been committed to building a strong team and fostering a workplace culture that stands apart in the heating and cooling industry.

Freyaldenhoven's path to business ownership began after serving on active duty in the military. While balancing his service, he attended the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton part time, earning a technical certificate in HVACR. He later gained experience working for a company

in Little Rock before deciding to pursue his dream of running his own business.

Originally from Morrilton, he holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Today, he calls Conway home, drawn to the opportunities and kindness of its community.

In addition to leading his business, Freyaldenhoven has served 27 years in the military. He is currently the first sergeant of the Arkansas Army National Guard's 87th Troop Command at Camp Robinson.



SKILLED TRADES

STEVEN LONG

Top Notch Heating & Air

Steven Long is the owner and CEO of Top Notch Heating & Air, where he sets the vision, drives strategic growth and oversees daily operations. He makes key decisions that shape profitability, expansion and team performance while working to build strong leaders and create opportunities for the future.

Long started the company with just himself, a truck and a determination to succeed. In the early days he handled every role, from running calls and troubleshooting systems to sales and installations. Now, five years later, he leads a growing team and guides the company forward with purpose and precision.

What he enjoys most is knowing the work makes a difference. For him, it is about more than repairing air conditioners. It is about keeping families safe and comfortable and building something meaningful with his wife while watching their team grow.

A native of Mountain Pine, Arkansas, Long and his family made Conway their home for its community spirit and opportunity. He and his company give back by supporting Habitat for Humanity, United Way of Central Arkansas and local schools.



SKILLED TRADES

JESSICA & ANDY HOOTEN

Empire Pest Solutions

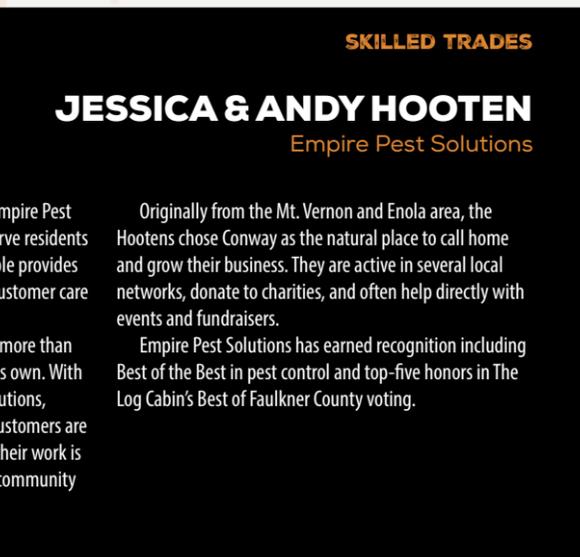


Jessica and Andy Hooten are the owners of Empire Pest Solutions, a company they opened in 2016 to serve residents and businesses across Faulkner County. The couple provides quality pest control services while focusing on customer care and community relationships.

Andy worked in the pest control industry for more than 20 years before deciding to start a business of his own. With Jessica, he turned that goal into Empire Pest Solutions, where both take on any role needed to ensure customers are satisfied. They say what they enjoy most about their work is the freedom it gives them to be involved in the community and the causes they believe in.

Originally from the Mt. Vernon and Enola area, the Hootens chose Conway as the natural place to call home and grow their business. They are active in several local networks, donate to charities, and often help directly with events and fundraisers.

Empire Pest Solutions has earned recognition including Best of the Best in pest control and top-five honors in The Log Cabin's Best of Faulkner County voting.



SKILLED TRADES

GREG MATTHEWS

Car-Son Construction



Greg Matthews has built a 12-year career at Car-Son Construction as an estimator and project manager. In his role, he evaluates potential projects, attends meetings, and manages ongoing work. He also addresses challenges as they arise, keeping projects on track and aligned with goals.

Born and raised in Conway, Matthews chose to remain in his hometown and build a career there. He earned an associate's degree in applied sciences and holds a master plumbing license, providing him with the technical knowledge and hands-on skills that inform his approach to construction projects. Matthews joined

Car-Son Construction through a friendship with the company's owner, and he has remained in the same position throughout his tenure.

He values the freedom his role provides, allowing him to manage his schedule while remaining hands-on with his projects. Matthews's combination of technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, and steady commitment has helped him contribute to the success of Car-Son Construction while establishing a long-term career in the field.

SKILLED TRADES

JASON KORDSMEIER

Kordsmeier Electric

Jason Kordsmeier has dedicated more than two decades to Kordsmeier Electric, where he serves as manager and estimator. In his role, he provides electrical estimates and ensures customers receive the best service experience possible from his team of electricians.

Kordsmeier has gained experience across nearly every aspect of the company during his 21 years there. From technical work in the field to sales and customer service, his background has given him a well-rounded perspective that supports his work today.

A Conway native, Kordsmeier was born and raised in the community he still calls home. After graduating from St. Joseph High School, he completed some coursework at

the University of Arkansas Community College at Morrilton and graduated from a four-year apprenticeship program in Conway.

He enjoys meeting new customers and building relationships through his work. Outside of the job, he volunteers his electrical skills at Conway Ministry and the local women's shelter, reflecting his commitment to serving both his customers and his community.

Kordsmeier's career continues to be defined by dedication, service, and strong community ties.



SKILLED TRADES

PAUL MAULDIN

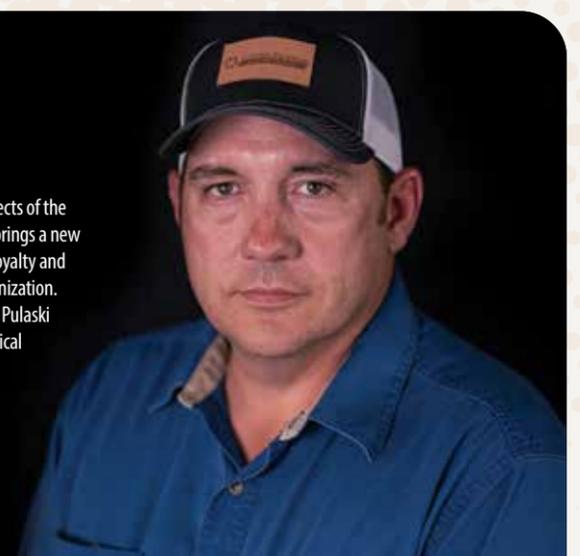
Conway Regional Health System

Paul Mauldin has built his career at Conway Regional Health System, where he serves as director of maintenance. In this role, he oversees facility management for the entire health system, ensuring operations run smoothly and reliably.

Mauldin began with Conway Regional more than 25 years ago, starting in high school with a summer job mowing the hospital lawns. What began as seasonal work grew into a lifelong career. Over time, he advanced through several positions including groundskeeper, maintenance technician and senior maintenance technician before stepping into his current leadership role.

He said the variety and problem-solving aspects of the job keep him motivated, noting that every day brings a new challenge. His long tenure is also rooted in the loyalty and family atmosphere he sees throughout the organization.

Originally from Quitman, Mauldin studied at Pulaski Technical College and earned a number of technical certifications. He has called Conway home for decades, valuing the relationships he has built during his career and the community that has supported him along the way.



SKILLED TRADES

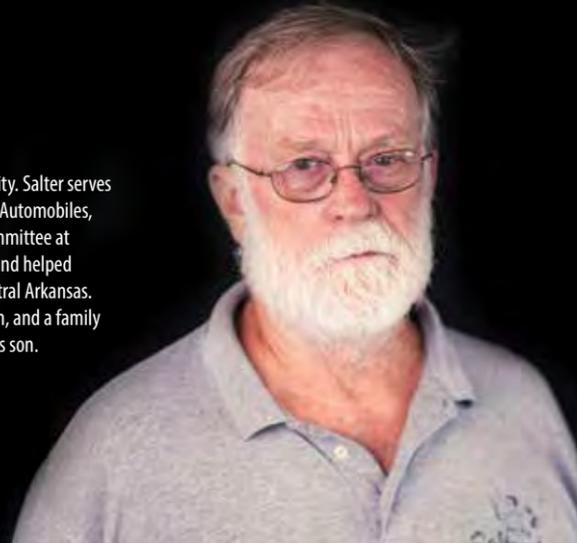
TONY SALTER

Salter Inc.

Tony Salter is the owner and master plumber of Salter, Inc., a Conway-based business he has been part of for 55 years. Born and raised in Conway, he began his career as an apprentice plumber in 1973, became a journeyman in 1977, and earned his master plumber license in 1989. He also holds credentials as a backflow prevention assembly tester, a licensed realtor, and a state commercial contractor.

Salter oversees plumbing projects for new construction, remodels, and residential and light commercial work while managing office operations, including staff supervision and finances. He says the most rewarding part of his work is helping the people he serves.

He has deep ties to the Conway community. Salter serves on the board of directors for the Museum of Automobiles, participates in the building and grounds committee at Central Baptist Church, and has donated to and helped build the ABS house at the University of Central Arkansas. His career reflects decades of skill, dedication, and a family tradition in plumbing that continues with his son.



UTILITIES

TOM MAKARA

Conway Corp

Tom Makara is the inventory control coordinator at Conway Corp, where he has worked for more than 15 years. In his role, he oversees the purchasing, receiving, and maintenance of all company products across departments. He also manages annual inventory counts and reconciliations, ensuring smooth operations throughout the organization.

He joined Conway Corp after taking a temporary warehouse position that grew into a full-time opportunity. Since then, he has held roles such as material handler and material coordinator, experiences that gave him knowledge that led him to his current position. He says the people he works with are the most rewarding aspect of his job.

Originally from Omaha, Nebraska, Makara moved to Conway in 1989 due to his father's job with Union Pacific Railroad. He says he has loved living in Conway, appreciating the small-town feel and the diversity of its people and culture.

Outside of work, Makara is active in community service. He has contributed to Bethlehem House drives, APFA Day of Giving, Conway Ministry supply efforts, and local walking trail and creek cleanups. He remains dedicated to supporting both Conway Corp and the community he calls home.



SKILLED TRADES

WESTLEY SULLINS

The Pest Detective

Westley Sullins has owned The Pest Detective for 13 years, balancing his role as supervisor with stepping in as a technician when needed. He oversees operations while staying connected to the field, ensuring customers receive dependable service and employees have his support.

A native of Swifton, Sullins moved to Conway to attend the University of Central Arkansas, where he took physics courses for a couple of years before pursuing other opportunities. Over time, he built The Pest Detective into a business that reflects his emphasis on hard work, service and relationships.

Sullins said his favorite part of the job is being around his employees and customers, where he can build lasting connections that extend beyond day-to-day work. His community involvement includes his church, the Chamber of Commerce, his daughters' school events and leading a Bible study. He also values fitness and enjoys spending time at the gym.

Sullins describes his approach as keeping his head down and working hard, staying focused on his responsibilities while investing in the people around him.



UTILITIES

LONNIE McCOY

Conway Corp

Lonnie McCoy has worked with Conway Corporation for 26 years, building a career defined by reliability and technical skill. As a senior electronics and electrical technician, he is responsible for maintaining electrical systems across Conway Corp facilities. His work spans from generators and pump stations on the water department side to lift stations on the wastewater side, along with beacon lights on the city's water towers.

For McCoy, the appeal of his work lies in the constant change. He said no two days are alike, and he appreciates the chance to move from one project to another, keeping his skills sharp and his workday engaging.

Originally from Clarendon, Arkansas, McCoy completed high school and pursued technical training before beginning his career at Conway Corp. He was drawn to the organization by the long-term stability it offered, as well as the benefits that supported his future.

His dedication has been recognized through Conway Corp's Tower of Excellence Award, a reflection of the impact he has made during more than two decades of service.



UTILITIES

MARCUS ARNOLD

Summit Utilities

Marcus Arnold has built a career rooted in customer service and community engagement through his work at Summit Utilities. As a customer development representative, he oversees new revenue projects for residential and small commercial developments across much of Arkansas. His role includes coordinating with internal departments such as engineering, operations and contract services, while also working directly with builders, developers, homeowners and engineering firms to ensure natural gas service is delivered smoothly and on schedule.

Arnold began his career in the oilfield industry, specializing in hydraulic fracturing. While the work matched his passion for the energy sector, the constant travel kept

him away from his family. Seeking stability without stepping away from the industry he valued, he relocated to Conway after accepting an opportunity with Summit Utilities, which was CenterPoint Energy at the time.

A native of Wilson, Arkansas, Arnold now calls Conway home and pairs his professional work with community service. He participates in the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce and lends his support to the Arkansas Food Bank, extending his impact beyond his career.



UTILITIES

JUSTIN MOORE

Conway Corp

Justin Moore has dedicated 17 years to Conway Corp, where he serves as senior foreman of telecom business class services. In this role, he manages a team of technicians responsible for installing and troubleshooting telecom products for businesses throughout Conway. His team also oversees the company's internal physical security and access control systems.

Moore has also held roles as a telecom construction technician, residential installation technician and residential troubleshooting technician. His career progression highlights both his technical expertise and his dedication to serving Conway's business community.

A native of Smackover, Arkansas, Moore moved to Conway for school and career opportunities and chose to make it home.

He holds certifications from the Society of Telecommunications Engineers, including Business Class Services Specialist and Broadband Distribution Specialist, as well as CompTIA Network+ and AXIS Communications.

His excellence has been recognized with the MACTA Customer Service Excellence Awards 5 Star Award for Master Performance in 2017 and 2019, along with Conway Corp's Customer Service Award in 2020. Beyond his professional accomplishments, Moore is deeply involved in his community as a member of Second Baptist Church, an assistant coach for youth baseball and a board member of the SCTE Razorback Chapter.



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CONGRATULATIONS *Greg Matthews*

2025 Blue Ribbon Workforce Hero

As a master plumber and senior plumbing estimator at Car-Son Construction, Greg has built a reputation as one of the top plumbing estimators in Arkansas. His expertise and leadership were instrumental in the renovation of the historic Boyle Building in Little Rock, now the home of the Arkansas Attorney General's Office. He played a key role in designing and planning the plumbing systems, ensuring modern efficiency while preserving the building's history. Greg's dedication to his craft, his skill in mentoring others and his commitment to excellence continue to make him a standout professional and a valuable asset to the construction industry.



Partnering with landowners to generate high-quality carbon credits



Tim White



We're proud to celebrate a leader whose vision and dedication strengthen our workforce and inspire our community. Congratulations Tim White on being recognized as a 2025 Blue Ribbon Workforce Award Honoree—we appreciate your commitment to making a lasting impact!

- The NativState Team



NATIVSTATE
FOREST CARBON DEVELOPMENT

Congratulations

Marcus Arnold

on being selected as a Blue Ribbon
Workforce Awards honoree!



Marcus Arnold
Customer Development
Representative



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CONGATUALTIONS JASON DYESS

MAINTENANCE DIVISION MANGER

2025 Blue Ribbon Workforce Award in Construction

Jason is the "backbone" of our Maintenance Division at B&A. For almost eight years, he has been a faithful and loyal employee and co-worker, consistently setting the standard in lawn care as our subject matter expert. His unmatched work ethic and commitment shine through in everything he does. Jason exemplifies the values we hold dear at B&A: Excellence, Honor, Progress, and Integrity.

Congrats, Jason, for a well-deserved award!



B&A
Property Maintenance

Paladino-Nash Inc.:

Building a Legacy From the Ground Up

In 1979, standing in the woods outside Cabot, Arkansas, Frank Paladino and Greg Nash faced their first project as business owners. The contract called for laying several miles of underground waterline, the kind of job they knew how to do from years of working in utilities. But this time the equipment, the risk, and the responsibility were theirs.

They had scraped together enough to buy a rubber-tire Ford backhoe and borrowed a bulldozer. Their wives pitched in when extra hands were needed, hauling pipe through thick stretches of forest where machinery could not pass. It was slow, dirty work, but for Paladino and Nash it was more than a paycheck. It was a test of whether they could turn skill and determination into something lasting.

“We didn’t have anybody else,” Nash recalled. “It was just me and Frank, and sometimes our wives. We had to get that line through no matter what.”

Taking a Chance

The decision to start a business was not born out of ambition alone. The two men started their own business because the company they worked for was planning to close within a year due to the owner’s retirement. With families to support, they had little choice but to act quickly. Paladino asked Nash to be his partner, and within a month they were bidding on their first contract with the help of Bernard Nabholz, their former employer.

Securing that first job meant more than work. It required faith that they could handle the responsibility. “It was spooky,” Paladino admitted. “We didn’t have money in the bank, and every time we bought equipment it was a risk.”



While Frank Paladino (left) and Greg Nash (right) remain involved in the company they started 46 years ago, the next generation is now stepping forward. In 1979, Paladino and Nash had their first job as business owners in the woods outside Cabot, laying several miles of underground waterline (pictured top right).
Bottom photo by Makenzie Evans



Instead of borrowing heavily, they worked job to job, paying bills as revenue came in and reinvesting in new equipment when absolutely necessary. Their philosophy was simple: survive today, and tomorrow will take care of itself.

From a Garage to a Company

In the early years, Paladino-Nash Inc. operated out of Paladino’s garage in Conway. The space was cramped, and the yard sometimes looked more like a construction site than a home. Fuel tanks and heavy machinery crowded the driveway.

By the early 1990s, the partners had purchased land and built their own facility. As the jobs grew, so did the need for more hands. Within five years, they began hiring workers beyond their immediate circle. Some of those employees have stayed more than three decades, a testament to the loyalty and culture the founders established.

Today, Paladino-Nash Inc. employs more than 30 people and runs five to 10 projects at a time. The company focuses on underground utility work—water and sewer lines, electrical, storm drain, gas, directional boring, treatment plants, and related infrastructure. Their projects dot Conway and the surrounding counties, from subdivisions to college campuses to municipal systems.

Growing Through Challenges

Over 46 years, the company has weathered multiple economic storms, from inflation in the 1980s to the Great Recession of 2008. Each downturn tested their endurance. “There were times we worked by the hour just to get by,” Paladino said. “You did whatever it took to make it to the next job.”

Even during lean times, they avoided overextending themselves. Rather than renting equipment, they preferred to buy, viewing machines as investments that could hold value. The approach kept them nimble and positioned them to take advantage of opportunities when work picked back up.



The decision to start a business was not born out of ambition alone. With families to support, they had little choice but to act quickly. One of their first jobs and the crew who helped, is pictured at the top left.
Right photo by Makenzie Evans Photography

One of their first major breakthroughs came in the early 1980s with a million-dollar project in Conway County. The scope and scale dwarfed their earlier jobs and proved they could compete with larger contractors. “That was the one where we felt solid about what we were doing,” Nash said.

A Reputation for Honesty

City officials and clients have repeatedly praised the company not just for the projects they complete, but for the way they conduct themselves.

“I hope people say we’re honest,” Nash said. “That we do what we say we’ll do. At the end of the day, that’s what matters most.”

The company’s fingerprints are all over Conway and beyond, from drainage systems along Highway 65 to projects at Hendrix College and the University of Central Arkansas. Residents drive past subdivisions, roundabouts, and community facilities every day without realizing Paladino Nash helped put them there.

Passing the Torch

While Paladino and Nash remain involved, the next generation is stepping forward. Family members Colbey and Jake have taken on more responsibility, managing crews and handling operations. For the founders, seeing their

children and grandchildren carry on the work is both gratifying and practical. “We can’t do it all ourselves anymore,” Nash said. “They’ve got the energy, and they’re doing a good job.”

Paladino agrees. “If they put their heart into it the way we did, they’ll be fine. That’s the advice I’d give—be prepared and will yourself to do it.”

Looking Back, Moving Forward

What began with two men, a backhoe, and the support of their wives has become a company that helps shape the infrastructure of Central Arkansas. For Paladino and Nash, success was never about becoming the biggest contractor in the region. It was about providing for their families, honoring their commitments, and building something that would last.

“I never thought we’d be here 46 years later,” Nash said. “Back then, I was just thinking about the next paycheck. But here we are.”

From those first muddy trenches in Cabot to projects across multiple counties, Paladino Nash stands as proof that determination, hard work, and a little help from family can build more than waterlines. They can build a legacy. 🍌

KPIs: The Numbers Every Business Owner Should Know

BY GRACE RAINS
Executive Director, Conductor

Running a business without tracking the right numbers is a lot like driving with your eyes closed. You might make it a little way on instinct, but sooner or later, you're bound to crash. That's why key performance indicators, or KPIs, are so powerful.

KPIs are the handful of metrics that tell you whether your business is truly healthy. Think five to seven numbers, not 50. The vital few, not the insignificant many. These are the ones that fuel your "economic engine" of growth, profitability, and sustainability. While all KPIs are metrics, not all metrics qualify as KPIs. The difference is whether they drive meaningful decisions.

Here's the proof. A McKinsey study found that data-driven organizations are 23 times more likely to acquire customers, six times more likely to retain them, and 19 times more likely to be profitable. Put simply: when you know your numbers, your business is more likely to succeed.

So, what makes a good KPI? It's important to separate vanity metrics from results-driven ones. Follower counts and page views might look nice in a report, but they don't necessarily help you make better business decisions. Always ask: what will I do differently based on this data? If the answer is nothing, it's not a KPI, it may just be a vanity metric.

Strong KPI tracking balances both leading and lagging indicators. Leading KPIs are predictive—they serve as a compass. For sales, that might be the number of demos booked or proposals sent. Lagging KPIs act more like a report card—think revenue closed

KPIs aren't just numbers on a spreadsheet, they are the story of your business, and when used properly, they give you the clarity to pivot, adapt, and grow.



grace@arconductor.org

BUILDING BUSINESS RESILIENCE

Grace Rains

or customer churn rate. Both perspectives matter. One helps you spot trends early; the other tells you how you actually performed.

Ratios are particularly valuable in KPIs because they give context. Think profit margin vs. profit. It gives more context to the number or value, normalizes results, and allows you to see trends regardless of scale.

But, most importantly, pick KPIs that are a good indicator for YOUR business. It's important that you tailor what you're tracking to give real insights on the status of your business.



KPIs are not about collecting data for data's sake—they're about guiding strategy. If your gross margin is shrinking, that's a red flag that costs are outpacing revenue. With that knowledge, you can negotiate supplier contracts, streamline operations, or shift your product mix.

Likewise, if your conversion rate is dropping, it signals that while your marketing may be bringing in traffic, it's not the right traffic—or your message isn't resonating. That insight can drive updates to your website, ad targeting, or even your offers.

The bottom line? KPIs aren't just numbers on a spreadsheet—they're the story of your business, and when used properly, they give you the clarity to pivot, adapt, and grow with confidence.

For more results-driven insights, tools, and connections, we invite you to join the Conductor community. Attend one of our events like our upcoming Strategic Growth Intensive, connect with our subject matter experts, and collaborate with entrepreneurs at the Arnold Innovation Center.

Start plugging in today at arconductor.org.



EDUCATION
Central Baptist College has named new department chairs in education and natural sciences. **Debbie Fleming** has joined the institution as professor of education and chair of the department. Fleming has more than 39 years of experience in education. She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Texas Christian University, a master's in education from Henderson State University, and a doctorate in education from Arkansas State University.

Before joining CBC full time, she was director of the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project with the Arkansas Department of Education and served as an adjunct professor in CBC's Education Department. Her experience and commitment to preparing future educators will play a key role in shaping the next generation of teachers.

Katherine Clohan Gasaway has been promoted to chair of the natural sciences and mathematics department at CBC.

Clohan Gasaway has been promoted to chair



of the Natural Sciences and Mathematics Department at CBC. She joined the college in 2023 as an associate professor of chemistry and quickly established herself as a respected faculty member.

Gasaway earned a bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences from Troy University and a doctorate in chemistry and biochemistry from Auburn University. Her leadership and expertise are expected to strengthen the department's academic programs.



Hendrix College Department of Music Chair and Associate Professor of Music, **Gretchen Renshaw**, presented at an international conference in Denmark recently.

Renshaw shared her expertise on arts-based education at the 85th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management.

Renshaw has long connected her work in music to broader themes of sustainability. In fall 2023, she directed the Hendrix Wind Ensemble in a concert titled SUSTAIN, designed to introduce the campus community to sustainability mindset principles through performance. Building on that project, she authored a chapter, "The SUSTAIN Concert: Arts, Ripple Effects, and the Sustainability

Mindset Principles," slated for publication later this year in The Power of Arts-Based Pedagogies: Transforming Mindsets to Shape Our Future.



INSURANCE
Kelley Erstine has been nominated for induction into the **Arkansas Insurance Hall of Fame**, housed at the **University of Central Arkansas** in the College of Business. Erstine is chief executive officer at **Independent Insurance Agents of Arkansas**.

Erstine is one of six Arkansans to be honored at an Oct. 16 event. The Arkansas Insurance Hall of Fame was created in 2015.

UTILITIES

Conway Corp has promoted **Brad Curtis** to operations system coordinator in the engineering department. Curtis will oversee and coordinate the daily operations of Conway Corp's electrical systems, ensuring reliability and efficiency. Curtis joined Conway Corp in 2024 as an electric systems engineer 2.



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This 4-bed, 3-bath home in Greenbrier was the second-most expensive home sold in Faulkner County in August. It sold for \$805,000 and \$277.39 per square foot. Photo courtesy of Zillow

A four-bedroom, four-bath residence in Greenbrier led all Faulkner County real estate transactions in August. The 3,750-square-foot dwelling on Highland Drive sold for \$856,717 and \$228.46 per square foot.

The newly built property sat on three-quarters of an acre and spent just six days on the market before closing.

Another Greenbrier property followed closely at No. 2. The four-bedroom, three-bath house on Bethlehem Road sold for \$805,000. At 2,902 square feet, it brought \$277.39 per square foot — the highest rate among August's top five. Constructed in 2022, the home came with more than 11 acres of land and was listed for 24 days before the sale.

The remaining three sales all came from Conway.

A 3,547-square-foot abode on Lisa Lane ranked third. Built in 2017, the four-bedroom, three-bath residence

sold for \$695,000, or \$195.94 per square foot. The house sat on four acres and was on the market for 24 days.

Not far behind was a 2021-built property on Briley Road. The 3,351-square-foot dwelling featured four bedrooms and three baths. It sold for \$684,978 after 30 days on the market. The price came to \$204.41 per square foot.

Rounding out the top five was a three-bedroom, three-bath house on Lipscomb Lane in Conway. The 3,325-square-foot residence sold for \$631,350, or \$189.88 per square foot. Built in 2017, the property was part of a 13.61-acre lot.

The five properties averaged \$734,209 in sale price and 3,375 square feet in size. That came to about \$219.22 per square foot. On average, they spent 17 days on the market before selling. 📍

\$856K

Price of top home sold in August

16.8

Average days spent on the market among top five homes

\$734,609

Average price of the top five homes

	ADDRESS	PRICE	PRICE PER SQ. FT.	APPROX. SQ. FT.	BEDS	FULL BATHS	DAYS ON MARKET
1	20 Highland Dr, Greenbrier	\$856,717	\$228.46	3,750	4	4	6
2	84 Bethlehem Road, Greenbrier	\$805,000	\$277.39	2,902	4	3	24
2	1125 Lisa Lane, Conway	\$695,000	\$195.94	3,547	4	3	24
4	1515 Briley, Conway	\$684,978	\$204.41	3,351	4	3	30
5	17 Lipscomb Lane, Conway	\$631,350	\$189.88	3,325	3	3	0

*Methodology Note: Conway figures are now for Conway City Limits.

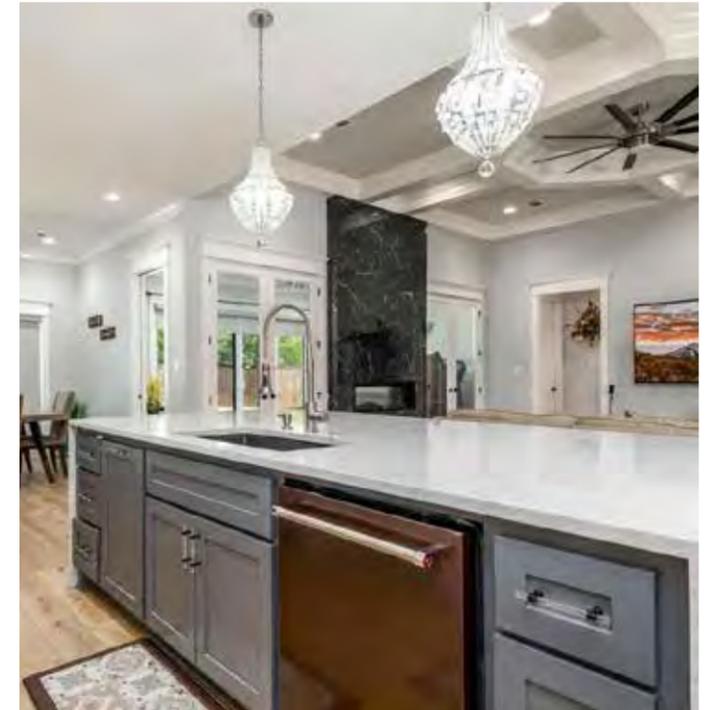
The number of homes sold is up this year in Conway and Faulkner County, while total sales volume has seen modest growth. Median prices per square foot are also higher in both, though median home prices have declined.

Faulkner County recorded 1,137 homes sold through August, a 5.57% increase from 1,077 at this time last year. Total sales reached \$326.964 million, up 1.38% from \$322.512 million in 2024.

The county's median price per square foot rose 1.96% to \$153.89, compared to \$150.94 last year. The median home price declined 2.91% to \$250,000. A year ago, the median was \$257,500.

In Conway, 502 homes were sold through August, a 12.05% increase from 448 during the same period in 2024. Sales volume totaled \$146.803 million, up 2.75% from \$142.868 million last year.

The city's median price per square foot climbed 1.09% to \$154.73, compared with \$153.06 in 2024. Conway's median home price fell 9.53% to \$248,750, down from \$275,000 a year ago. 📍



12.05%

Year-over-Year Increase in Conway Home Sales

9.53%

Decline in Conway's Median Home Price

\$326.964 M

Total Value of Homes Sold in Faulkner County through August



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WHAT'S THAT GONNA BE?

Braum's to Break Ground on Conway Location This Fall

Braum's is scheduled to break ground on a long-awaited Conway location this fall at the corner of Farris Road and Prince Street, according to a city official. This will be the restaurant's first location in central Arkansas.

The Conway City Council voted unanimously, 7-0, at its meeting on Aug. 26 to rezone a piece of land at 959 Farris Road from R-1 to O-1. The rezoning was recommended to provide better access to Braum's, set to be constructed just north of the property, as well as other recent commercial projects in the area, including Don Pepe's, Shadrachs Coffee, and Rotolo's.

During the discussion to rezone the land, the city's business services coordinator, Troy Rice, said the popular burger and ice cream chain has plans to break ground on its first Conway location in November.

Braum's began in 1969 in Oklahoma City as Braum's Ice Cream & Dairy Store. Today, it operates more than 300 locations across five states: Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. It has 13 locations in Arkansas, including Alma, Fort Smith, Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, Bentonville, Siloam Springs, and Van Buren.k. 📍



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ECONOMY AT A GLANCE

The Key Economic Indicators for Conway & Faulkner County

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July 2025

Civilian Labor Force

Seasonally Adjusted

U.S.	AR	Conway	Faulkner Co.
170,342,000	1,424,739	38,371	68,493

Not Seasonally Adjusted

Unemployment Rate

Not Seasonally Adjusted

U.S.	AR	Conway	Faulkner Co.
4.2%	3.7%	3.8%	3.8%

TAX COLLECTIONS

Total Sales

August 2025

Conway	Faulkner County
2025: \$1,524,000,000	2025: \$2,060,000,000
2024: \$1,520,200,000	2024: \$2,080,000,000
0.28% increase	1.05% decrease

1.75% TAX RATE*

Restaurant Sales Tax*

July 2025

Conway
2025: \$208,242,659
2024: \$200,907,280
3.65% increase

*includes mixed drink sales

Hotel Sales Tax

July 2025

Conway
2025: \$15,866,899
2024: \$17,657,599
10.14% decrease

SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

Home Permits

YTD - August 2025

Conway
2025: 105
2024: 89
17.98% increase

Homes Sold

YTD - August 2025

Conway	Faulkner County
2025: 502	2025: 1,137
2024: 448	2024: 1,077
12.05% increase	5.57% increase

Home Sales

YTD - August 2025

Conway	Faulkner County
2025: \$146,803,659	2025: \$326,964,516
2024: \$142,868,516	2024: \$322,512,549
2.75% increase	1.38% increase

Median Home Price

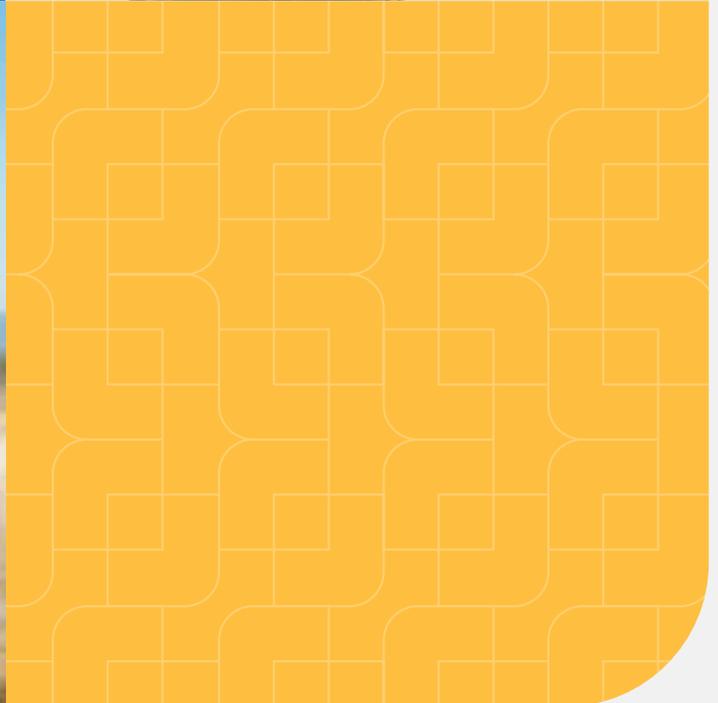
YTD - August 2025

Conway	Faulkner County
2025: \$248,750	2025: \$250,000
2024: \$275,000	2024: \$257,500
9.55% decrease	2.91% decrease

View more economic data at pulseofconway.com

Data is current at the time of printing. *Methodology Note: Conway figures are now for "Conway City Limits"

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