

# UNDER FORUM

*2018 Report*

*Building a Better Brand for Arkansas*

## *THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS*

### **Arkansas Business**

Arkansas Business Publishing Group produces a wide variety of award-winning niche publications which bring together highly targeted audiences and advertisers who want to reach them. From business to culture-focused publications, our more than 20 publications reach affluent individuals who are decision-makers and purchasers of business and consumer products. For more information, visit [arkansasbusiness.com](http://arkansasbusiness.com).



The first school in the nation to offer a Master of Public Service (MPS) degree, the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service gives students the knowledge and experience to further their careers in the areas of nonprofit, governmental, volunteer or private sector service.

A two-year graduate program with a real-world curriculum, the Clinton School is located on the grounds of the William J. Clinton Presidential Center and Park in Little Rock, Ark. The school embodies former President Clinton's vision of building leadership in civic engagement and enhancing people's capacity to work across disciplinary, racial, ethnic and geographical boundaries. For more information, visit [clintonschool.uasys.edu](http://clintonschool.uasys.edu).



Since 1997, the Northwest Arkansas Business Journal has been the "go to" publication for businesses in the northwest region of the state. With relevant business content, the leaders in Northwest Arkansas have come to rely on their Northwest Arkansas Business Journal as the voice of our local business community. With an affluent readership of business leaders, this is the resource for business to business messaging, prospecting and critical decision making. The Northwest Arkansas Business Journal combines its reporting and annual events to support and highlight outstanding achievement and keep our readers aware of vital information. To learn more, visit [nwabusinessjournal.com](http://nwabusinessjournal.com).



WINTHROP ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SYSTEM

In 2005, the University of Arkansas System established the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute with a grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Charitable Trust. By integrating the resources and expertise of the University of Arkansas System with the legacy and ideas of Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller, this educational institute and conference center creates an atmosphere where collaboration and change can thrive.

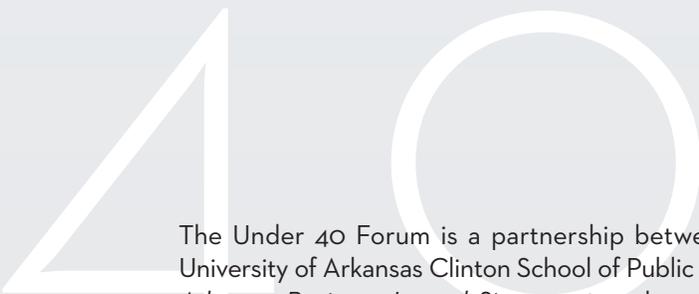
Program areas include Agriculture, Arts and Humanities, Civic Engagement, Economic Development, and Health. To learn more call 501-727-5435 or visit the website at [rockefellerinstitute.org](http://rockefellerinstitute.org).

## *AND TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction.....  | 5  |
| Internal Perceptions.....  | 8  |
| <i>Concentrated internal marketing campaign</i> .....  | 8  |
| <i>Encourage and capture positive testimonials</i> .....                                       | 8  |
| <i>Continue to build on intrastate tourism</i> .....   | 9  |
| External Perceptions.....  | 10 |
| <i>Ambassadors Program</i> .....   | 10 |
| <i>Creating an online digital campaign – #ARHome</i> .....                                     | 11 |
| Creative Industries.....   | 12 |
| <i>Widespread dissemination of opportunity within the creative economy</i> .....               | 12 |
| <i>Allocate funding for arts education and initiatives throughout the state</i> .....          | 13 |
| <i>Education exposure as core curriculum</i> .....   | 13 |
| Natural Resources.....   | 14 |
| <i>Connect nature-based resource proprietors</i> .....   | 14 |
| <i>Embrace a green identity</i> .....  | 15 |
| <i>Include nature-based and outdoor recreation curriculum in hospitality and tourism</i> ..... | 15 |
| Conclusion.....  | 16 |



The Under 40 Forum is a partnership between the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service, *Arkansas Business* and the *Northwest Arkansas Business Journal*. Since 2016, each year we invite the 80 “Forty Under 40” honorees from the state’s two business publications to come together and search for solutions to the state’s challenges. This report contains the feedback and insight of this year’s group and is distributed to 600 leaders and innovators statewide, including legislators, government officials and chambers of commerce. We encourage you to use the report’s recommendations to join these Under 40 honorees in making a lasting difference in Arkansas.

Previous Forum recommendations have resulted in significant positive change, such as the Arkansas Economic Development Commission now meets regularly with Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism to combine efforts and support each other’s initiatives. This year’s Under 40 Leaders are dynamic, insightful and full of strong opinions. The 2018 Forum, held April 5-6 at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, focused on the issue of “Building a Better Brand for Arkansas.”

Many Arkansans are familiar with the assets our state has to offer, but that knowledge doesn’t consistently extend to those who live outside the state. We know our state is a great place to work and play, so why does our national reputation not reflect that reality? Despite efforts by many, why would the information that we contain a world-class art museum, hundreds of miles of bike trails and never-ending cultural experiences surprise most people outside the state, and plenty from inside? These questions and more were posed and considered during the two-day Forum. The Under 40 Leaders, already identified as go-getters and change-makers, applied their leadership and business acumen to bettering the brand of Arkansas.

Read on to learn *their* thoughts, which we hope inspire you to action.

Marta Loyd, Ed.D.  
Executive Director  
Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

Skip Rutherford  
Dean  
Clinton School of Public Service

# BUILDING A BETTER BRAND FOR ARKANSAS



## INTRODUCTION

The State of Arkansas has an impressive number of assets – in landscapes, history, art, music, nature, innovation and craftsmanship – by which to tell the Arkansas Story.

“  
*WE HAVE A GREAT  
PLACE TO LIVE AND  
WORK, SO WHY DON'T  
MORE PEOPLE KNOW  
ABOUT US?*  
”

When prospective visitors are shown pictures of the state's assets – such as outdoor activities, walkable places and biking options – they are more likely to assign them to other states rather than to Arkansas. We have a great place to live and work, so why don't more people know about us?

As the marketplace becomes increasingly competitive, the need for our state to break through the noise and differentiate itself will become even more critical as it relates to retaining and attracting talent for businesses and tourism. It is here that our conversations began in April at the 2018 Under 40 Forum, where we asked participants to

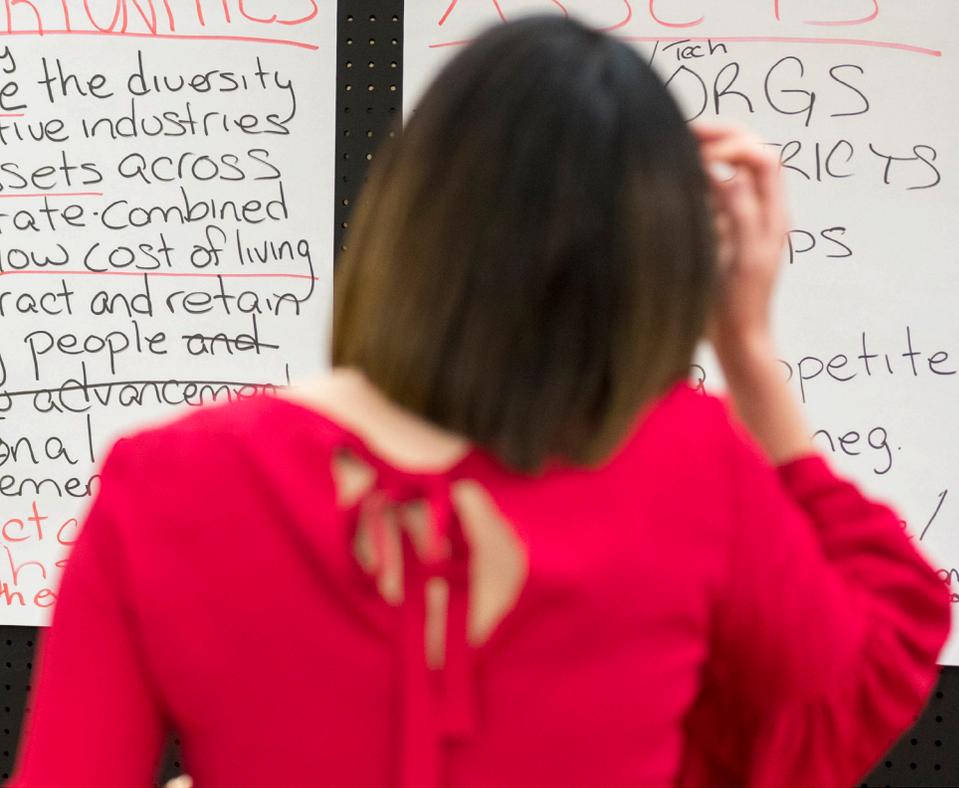
imagine Arkansas as a leader in economic prosperity and quality of life. How do we move from current perceptions of the state to a better vision for the future?

Once known as the Wonder State, the Land of Opportunity, and since 1980 the Natural State, state leaders have a history of utilizing place branding to improve the state's image and attract economic investment. Since then, Arkansas has brought itself out of the solely agriculture-dependent economy of the 19th and 20th centuries and into the 21st century, competing globally and becoming a retail and logistics powerhouse while continuing to dominate in the agricultural sector. However,

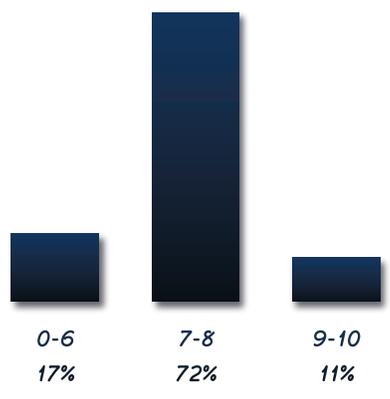
**THEME #3**  
 Note - Educate - Connect  
**CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**  
 economic opportunities  
 promote current creative assets  
 various education opps in the creative industries  
 connect creative opps

**OPPORTUNITIES**  
 - Actively Promote the diversity of creative industries and assets across the state. Combined with low cost of living to attract and retain young people and show advancement  
 - Bolster Educational engagement  
 - Connect through relationships with e

**ASSETS**  
 Tech ORGS  
 DISTRICTS  
 PS  
 appetite  
 neg.  
 ons



**WE ASKED: ON A SCALE OF 1-10, HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND MOVING TO ARKANSAS TO A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE?**



these efforts have done little to change outside perception of the state, as Under 40 Leaders revealed being personally and professionally affected by the negative perceptions and stereotypes of Arkansas. Those perceptions affect our economy and thus our quality of life. So where do we start?

In partnership with the Clinton School of Public Service, Arkansas Business and the Northwest Arkansas Business Journal, the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute held the third convening of Under 40 honorees that began to explore a new framework to enhance the state's brand as a way to recruit and retain the best and brightest talent and to attract economic attention. Similar to when Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller arrived in Arkansas in 1953, these Under 40 Leaders also see Arkansas as full of promise, a state where their ideas can flourish and have substantial impact.

At the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, our secret – and it's just what Gov. Rockefeller did so well – is to provide a comfortable space to discuss uncomfortable issues. By providing the space to imagine what's possible, it didn't take long for the men and women invited to get pretty honest with each other about how they saw the issues and to articulate a way for us to move forward. While they certainly weren't of one mind on how to solve Arkansas's perception problem, the participants agreed on one thing: if we stick our heads in the sand, the future will roll right over us.

Through facilitated discussions moderated by Greg Hodge, social change activist and organizational development consultant with Khepera Consulting, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute staff led thirty-eight participants through a series of structured dialogues. At the Forum, participants first identified what they felt are the state's greatest assets. Participants were able to identify more than ninety-one assets that strengthen the state's brand identity. These discussions then led to participants reflecting upon their own personal and professional experiences when interacting with others about the positive and negative perceptions of the state. They were then asked to list the challenges the state faces with our current brand identity. To gain insights into current efforts and trends being used to market and brand the state, Under 40 Leaders also heard from a panel of representatives from the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and the Arkansas Economic Development Institute. From these discussions, Under 40 Leaders developed recommendations and action steps intended to guide solutions in considering what the state's brand might look like three, five, and ten years from now. The results of their observations and recommendations are compiled in this report. The four major areas of focus are:

- Improving internal perceptions of the state
- Changing external perceptions of the state by calling on Arkansans to act as ambassadors
- Utilizing Arkansas's creative industry sector
- Leveraging Arkansas's natural resources

The Under 40 Forum examines the challenges and opportunities to build the narrative of the state from diverse perspectives, bringing together the voices of long-time residents of the state and newer residents as well. These Under 40 Leaders represented a variety of sectors including business, law, health, government, art and design. What unites them is the shared recognition that we must do more to build upon our assets within the state to create vibrant communities, and in turn, strengthen the social and economic fabric of our state.



“

*THE PARTICIPANTS AGREED  
ON ONE THING: IF WE  
STICK OUR HEADS IN THE  
SAND, THE FUTURE WILL  
ROLL RIGHT OVER US.*

”

## INTERNAL PERCEPTIONS

We can tell the story of deficit, problem and threat in great detail, but when it comes to the story of our assets and achievements in the state we're too often empty handed.

Unfortunately, even when talking to other Arkansans we tend to highlight the negatives of the state rather than the strengths. Some issues that were discussed at the forum included the lack of a positive narrative and awareness around Arkansas business opportunities and an undercurrent of competition between different regions in the state, particularly in Central and Northwest Arkansas. Under 40 Leaders are adamant in their stance that before we address the image of what we project to outsiders through positive marketing campaigns, we must first discuss the image we internalize about ourselves.

In his comments to the Under 40 Leaders, Skip Rutherford admonished us as residents that, "We should be ashamed that we say thank goodness for Mississippi." Such statements have the ability to do more harm than good and undercut the credibility of much good work happening in the state in spite of our low national rankings in some areas. He noted that as Arkansans, we have a responsibility to shatter this defeatist attitude and to champion a narrative where everyone is afforded equitable opportunities to grow where they are planted. We should embrace a brand that incorporates and celebrates the entire state as "Our Arkansas" rather than keeping our focus regionally specific.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Concentrated internal marketing campaign*

Under 40 Leaders believe the Arkansas brand as the Natural State is strong but we must expand that message to one that speaks to the business,



entrepreneur and tourism sectors within the state through a bottom-up approach. Under 40 Leaders suggested building a public-private partnership at the grassroots level that can work to develop a concentrated internal marketing campaign. This would allow residents, state employees, business leaders and other ambassadors to define the state by its positive aspirations and contributions. In turn they could invest in those assets including the state's geographic diversity, quality of life and creative industries, for their continued benefit to the state. It is how we align this story with our economic and tourism opportunities that Under 40 Leaders feel will position our state as a leader in economic development and quality of life. As the state continues to work in crafting its "story" to communicate our unique qualities and advantages, it must also maintain a level of consistency in key messages across the state.

### *Encourage and capture positive testimonials*

Stories are powerful. They have the power to inform while also evoking emotional connectedness that transcends logos, taglines and marketing strategies. Consistently popular among all Under 40 Leaders was that authentic, positive Arkansas stories should be shared and utilized as a way to attract tourists, but also as a way to retain talent within the state. When we share our successes with each other, the image of Arkansas as being the "Land of Opportunity" comes

# WHO WAS AT THE FORUM?

## HOMETOWNS

to life. Positive Arkansas stories could also have an economic impact, describing the many technical opportunities that are available as compared to larger metropolitan areas.

Under 40 Leaders suggested developing a shared web portal that curates and captures these stories and allows residents and industry leaders to share and highlight these experiences in ways that are “on brand.” The web portal could also provide an online toolkit for industry leaders that includes a “how-to” guide with pre-packaged messages, design elements and shared language that would work to unify Arkansas across regions while attracting talent and promoting tourism. As a low-cost way to spur creativity and build upon the state’s increasing recognition in code education, Under 40 Leaders suggest hosting a civic hackathon that brings together technology professionals and students from across the state to co-create ideas to determine the best vehicle in bringing the elements discussed above together in a user-friendly platform.

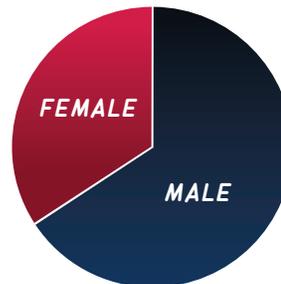


### Continue to build on intrastate tourism

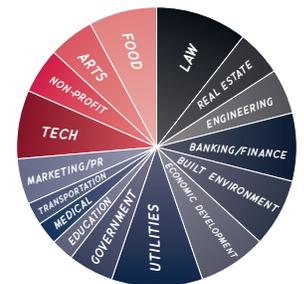
While some regions are restrained by geographical barriers, in general the ability to get from one corner of the state to another is a short drive compared to other states. Under 40 Leaders suggest that we, as a state, should continue to capitalize on our internal intrastate tourism campaign by encouraging visitors and travelers to extend their stay through collaboration among tourism industry leaders. One Under 40 Leader suggested creating a State Museum and Music Pass to encourage visitors to tour the entire state rather than just one region. By providing options for visitors to experience more than two locations in different regions, visitors will have a richer cultural experience that highlights the state’s diversity in geography, economy and cultural amenities.

Under 40 Leaders also acknowledge that a one-size-fits all model will not work for the diverse regions of Arkansas in that the stories that resonate with residents and tourists in Northwest Arkansas may not resonate with those in the Delta or Southwest Arkansas. Rather, because of this diversity we can capitalize on our state’s appeal to a broad audience and tell a cohesive story about what makes Arkansas unique and a desirable place to live, work and play.

## GENDER



## INDUSTRIES

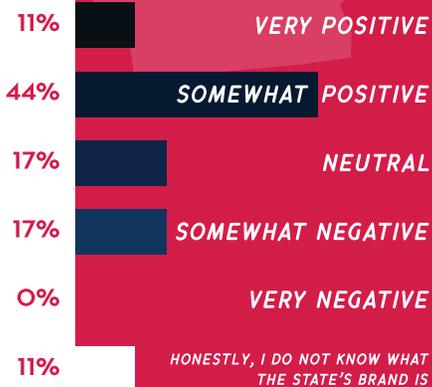


## JOB TITLES



## WE ASKED...

What is your first reaction to Arkansas's brand?



How would you rate the quality of life in the state?



## EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS

Little Rock and Ft. Smith were recently named as two of the saddest cities in North America.<sup>1</sup> So, how do we replace the negative narrative of Arkansas with qualities similar to those we tout?

Under 40 Leaders believe that when positive stories are told it will lead to a cohesive brand that embraces all of our regions. External perceptions of Arkansas are created through the messages that we send to each other, the nation and the world. When people think of Arkansas, rather than envisioning a southern stereotype people should picture our robust economy and low unemployment. We also need to empower everyday citizens to be brand ambassadors so that Arkansas's brand matches what customers and our friends are experiencing while they are in the state. As one Under 40 Leader noted, "If the people who live here don't know the brand, there is a problem. We should be the state's best sales people."

industries representing each corner of the state.

We need a positive Arkansas identity to embrace and instill a sense of pride in our state. A great example of this noted by Under 40 Leaders is First Security Bank's "Only in Arkansas" campaign that highlights unique experiences within the state by utilizing local bloggers and influencers. These bloggers share their experiences while highlighting their own passions which appeals to their national following bringing more recognition to our state. This is a great example of a private business utilizing their unique perspective in showcasing positive Arkansas stories and using Arkansans to get the message out about what we have to offer. As one Under 40 Leader stated, "Arkansas is a hard sell on paper. This has made hiring from out of state difficult, but I've had to do it because the talent we need is not concentrated here. We have an image problem that is easily dispelled when Arkansas is experienced in person." While outsiders to the state might ignore a state sponsored commercial or ad in an airport, a recommendation from a local artist or a passionate, well-known resident will have far more impact. Similar recommendations that were offered include tourism industry leaders creating promotional kits and developing cultural showcases at national and foreign investment summits, and state-led trade missions where locally crafted products and music are highlighted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Ambassadors Program

Under 40 Leaders believe every Arkansan is an ambassador. By equipping residents and local businesses with powerful stories and tools to capture these stories, Under 40 Leaders believe that the state can become more known for its assets and entrepreneurial spirit rather than being typecast as an uneducated or unsophisticated state. Such efforts could potentially be sustained through an ambassador program that recruits a diverse pool of candidates from the tech, agriculture and creative



**Creating an online digital campaign – #ARHome**

Nowhere in our discussion brought about more excitement than in discussing #ARHome or “Our” Home. Under 40 Leaders were empowered during discussions on April 5 to not wait for others to tout the great assets we have in the state but to begin efforts to curate their own stories. Through social media channels, Under 40 Leaders suggested creating a digital campaign utilizing the hashtag #ARHome to share what they love about the state and why they are proud to call Arkansas home. Many of the leaders present shared stories about why they love the state of Arkansas including its rich amenities and affordability. “I moved [to Arkansas] for a job, but stayed here for the quality of life,” one honoree said. Similar digital campaigns can be used for micro brands, such as #ARBeer to highlight Arkansas’s rising craft brewery scene and #ARFoodie to showcase the state’s culinary renaissance.

Under 40 leaders recognized the work the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism has done with such a limited budget in comparison with other states. In fact, Longwoods International, a tourism marketing and research organization, found in 2016 that states with tourism promotional campaigns created a “halo effect” causing an increase in not

“  
*THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS, UNDER 40 LEADERS SUGGESTED CREATING A DIGITAL CAMPAIGN UTILIZING THE HASHTAG #ARHOME TO SHARE WHAT THEY LOVE ABOUT THE STATE AND WHY THEY ARE PROUD TO CALL ARKANSAS HOME.*  
 ”

only visitations by tourists but also an increase in real estate sales, purchases of second homes, and even college recruitment (Kunkel 2016). The preceding recommendations are meant to enhance current efforts to dispel the negative internal and external perceptions that hinder the state’s ability to convince people to live, work and play in Arkansas.



## CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Under 40 Leaders identified the state's creative industry, both in the artistic and technical sense, as a sector that is well-positioned to retain and attract younger talent.

The creative industry sector is composed of businesses that produce and distribute goods and services for which the aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional engagement of the consumer adds value to products in the marketplace. According to the National Governors Association Report on Arts and the Economy, the creative industry in Arkansas employs nearly 27,000 individuals and generates \$927 million in personal income for Arkansas citizens making it the state's third largest employment sector – after transport and logistics and perishable and processed foods.<sup>2</sup> The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation also assessed the creative economy in Arkansas, issuing a report in 2009 recommending that this sector be a point of priority for local and state government.<sup>3</sup> Under 40 Leaders agreed that the creative economy should be seen as an integral part of the state's economic and workforce development infrastructure.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Widespread dissemination of opportunity within the creative economy*

The creative industry sector is experiencing a great deal of momentum and quickly taking root in communities and art districts across the state. The industry is comprised of more than just artists but also includes individuals in IT, software, architecture, music, photography, TV, publishing, film, radio, advertising and marketing. Under 40 Leaders suggested creating an accessible system for disseminating information to educate state leaders and others about the opportunities and impact the creative economy has within the state. This system could be as simple as a website that houses readily accessible data on the





## NATURAL RESOURCES

Arkansas is renowned for its natural resources. The state boasts scenic landscapes, rivers and diverse topography with mild seasons and wide, green spaces that, once experienced, make Arkansas an easy sell.

These qualities have attracted visitors far and wide and have inspired many songs, poems and novels from famous residents such as Johnny Cash and famous visitors such as Ernest Hemingway. With natural and inspiring amenities like these, Under 40 Leaders were eager to connect our natural resource enterprises within the state while also utilizing the state as an outdoor classroom and making a bold leap into embracing a green identity by leading the nation in sustainability and green industries. Arkansas is poised to have a global impact in this area due to the strength of retail, transportation and logistics companies in the state.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Connect nature-based resource proprietors*

Nature-based enterprises are growing in surrounding states including Mississippi and Louisiana and Arkansas is no different, as farmers and ranchers look to supplement their income by providing agritourism, eco-tourism and wildlife-related activities such as hunting, fishing, duck hunting and bird watching. Such outdoor offerings attract international visitors to the state's rural areas. One idea Under 40

Leaders discussed was to connect nature-based resource proprietors with one another, and to connect tourists to those proprietors in a user-friendly mobile application. The application could allow proprietors to update and add information, while also allowing tourists to curate and share their trips for the benefit of others and for themselves.

### ***Embrace a green identity***

By leveraging Arkansas's brand identity in natural resources, Under 40 Leaders advise local communities and businesses to research and enact sustainability practices to begin establishing the state as a leader in the green economy. Such practices could expand the brand to include the state's "Natural State of Doing Business" as a way to embrace more innovative eco-friendly practices. One of the state's largest employers, Walmart, is already leading in this area by adopting waste reduction practices where products are designed and handled in such a way that they are cycled back into the economic stream.<sup>7</sup> Such efforts can lead to new products and high-tech and high-paying jobs that tend to attract both millennials and Generation Z.

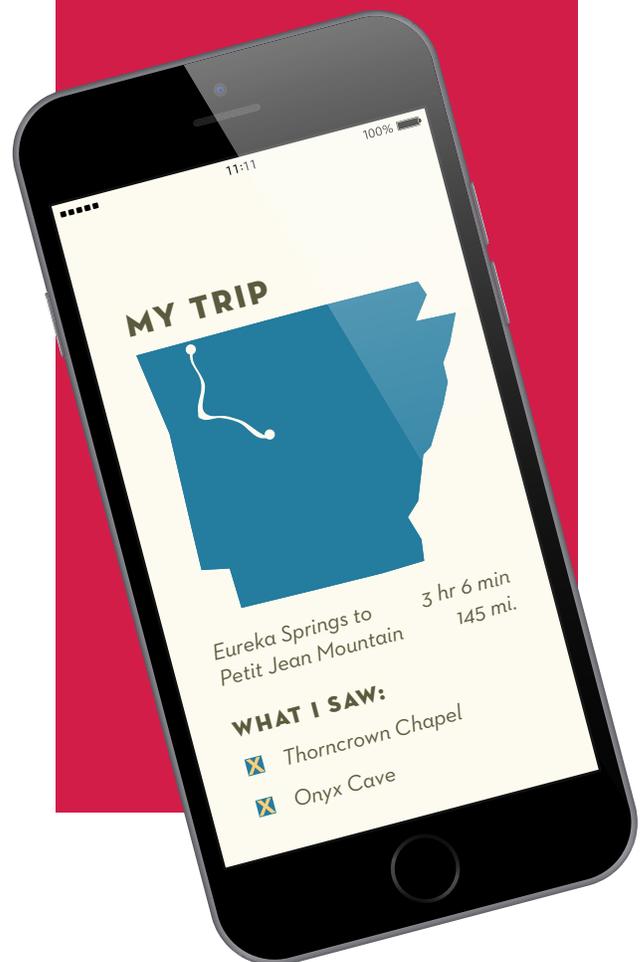
### ***Include nature-based and outdoor recreation curriculum in hospitality and tourism***

There are several institutions across the state that have stellar hospitality management programs including Arkansas Tech University, Northwest Arkansas Community College, Pulaski Technical College and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Under 40 Leaders believe that by incorporating nature-based enterprise and outdoor recreation curriculum into these programs, both colleges and the state's economy will benefit. By obtaining a degree, business owners in the field will be updated on industry standards and students will be introduced to state amenities and learn technical knowledge in ways that encourage environmentally and ethically responsible behaviors for our state's natural resources.

“

*ONE IDEA UNDER 40 LEADERS DISCUSSED WAS TO CONNECT NATURE-BASED RESOURCE PROPRIETORS WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND TO CONNECT TOURISTS TO THOSE PROPRIETORS IN A USER-FRIENDLY MOBILE APPLICATION.*

”





## CONCLUSION

We live in a transformative age, and our state faces complex issues to which there are no easy answers.

Despite this, our state has an amazing story to tell, and it is how we align this story with our economic and tourism opportunities that Under 40 Leaders feel will position our state as a leader in economic development and quality of life.

So, how do we tell the Arkansas Story? It's no exaggeration to say that the Arkansas Story lies within the people of the state, and the unique places that can be found throughout. As economic development expert Don Rypkema says, "Nobody goes anywhere to go down a waterslide or buy a tee-shirt. They may do both these things, but that isn't the reason they went there." People travel to experience places, especially places that are special, unusual, and unique.

These Under 40 Leaders firmly believe their generation is poised to offer innovative solutions that will lead Arkansas toward a brighter future. A better brand for Arkansas is one that celebrates the essence of Arkansas's heritage, natural beauty and economic opportunity by:

- Improving internal perceptions of the state by creating a cohesive brand story that builds upon the assets of the state in industry, agriculture and tourism;

- Changing external perceptions of the state by calling on Arkansans to act as ambassadors to promote the natural and demographic diversity within the state in addition to our high quality of life and entrepreneurial opportunities;
- Utilizing Arkansas's creative industry sector to bridge differences, improve educational opportunities and increase economic development opportunities; and
- Leveraging Arkansas's natural resources to define our core identity through educational and marketing opportunities.

The 2018 Under 40 Leaders came to the mountain and challenged us to think differently about our state. Under 40 Leaders recognize that many of the recommendations listed above will not happen overnight, nor can one organization or state department act alone. In order to make meaningful change, it will be up to all of us as Arkansans to become positive ambassadors for the state instead of apologizing for our perceived shortcomings. By being active in forming coalitions and initiatives that can build upon the state's assets, together we can tell the world the true story of Arkansas.

### *Under 40 Forum Partners*

**Mitch Bettis**

President  
Arkansas Business Publishing Group

**Rob Gutteridge**

Publisher  
Northwest Arkansas Business Journal

**Dr. Marta Loyd**

Executive Director  
Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

**Skip Rutherford**

Dean  
Clinton School of Public Service

### *Under 40 Forum Facilitators*

**Greg Hodge**

Social Change Activist and Organizational and  
Development Consultant  
Khepera Consulting

**Rockefeller Institute Staff**

Programs  
Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

### *Under 40 Forum Participants*

**Adrienne Baker**

Chief Operating Officer  
Wright Lindsey Jennings

**Brian Blackman**

Chief Operating Officer  
WACO Title Company

**John Scott Bull**

Vice President of Sales and Marketing  
Pace Industries

**Kelly Carlson**

Vice President  
Arvest Bank

**Sam Carrasquillo**

President  
SC Home

**Terrance Clark**

Co-Founder  
Thrive

**Michael Considine**

Director of Customer Service  
Entergy Arkansas

**Marisha DiCarlo**

Director of Communications  
Arkansas Department of Health

**Tara Dryer**

Director of Training, Corporate Development,  
Academic Outreach  
University of Arkansas

**Jerry Fenter**

CEO  
Fenter Physical Therapy

**Eric Grant**

Vice President Finance  
Maverick Transportation

**Nathan Green**

Vice President of Public Affairs  
inVeritas Research and Consulting

**Lindsay Henderson**

Chief Revenue Officer  
Conway Area Chamber of Commerce

**Chris Hughes**

Regional Leader/Financial Advisor  
Edward Jones

**Charleen Jones**

Regional Sales Manager  
InComm

**Christina Karnatz**

Director of Development  
Mount Sequoyah Center

**Ali King Sugg**

Owner/General Manager  
Red River Radio, Inc

**Casey Kinsey**

CEO  
Lofty Labs LLC

**Antoine Lucas**

Director of Transmission Planning  
Southwest Power Pool

**Joshua McFadden**

Partner  
Davis Law Firm

**Martin Miller**

Executive Director  
TheatreSquared

**Jonathan Opitz**

Principal  
AMR Architects

**Joe Payne**

Vice President of Design  
RevUnit

**Dave Pinson**

President/CEO  
Trinity Multifamily

**Maria Quiñones**

Director, Sales Operations  
AT&T

**Jarrod Ramsey**

Account Technology Strategist  
Microsoft

**Megan Raynor**

Accountant  
Hanna Oil & Gas

**Kevin Rose**

Market President  
Centennial Bank

**Cal Rose**

Attorney  
Wright Lindsey Jennings

**Sarah Slocum Collins**

Federal Government Relations  
Tyson Foods

**Jeremy Sparks**

Senior Manager, Organizational Change  
Tyson Foods

**Will Staley**

Co-Founder  
Thrive

**Zach Steadman**

Partner  
Mitchell Williams Law Firm

**Natalie Tibbs**

Executive Director  
Children's Advocacy Center of Benton County

**Wesley Walker**

Category Leadership Manager  
Kraft Heinz Company

**Wesley Welch**

Director - Program Engineering  
Dassault Falcon Jet

**Alison Williams**

Chief of Staff  
Office of Gov. Asa Hutchinson

**Rodney Wirth**

Principal/ Vice President  
Cobblestone Homes

**Contact us****Tiffany Henry**

Program Officer  
Winthrop Rockefeller Institute  
thenry@uawri.org | o. 501.727.6220 | c. 501.589.7353  
@rockefeller | rockefellerinstitute.org

**Footnotes**

1. <https://usat.ly/2JAzcpR>
2. [http://observgo.quebec.ca/observgo/fichiers/59058\\_nga\\_center.pdf](http://observgo.quebec.ca/observgo/fichiers/59058_nga_center.pdf)
3. [https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jd\\_r-UtEHS8J:https://www.arkansasarts.org/\\_literature\\_134779/Unveiling\\_the\\_Creative\\_Economy\\_Project\\_Report+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:jd_r-UtEHS8J:https://www.arkansasarts.org/_literature_134779/Unveiling_the_Creative_Economy_Project_Report+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us)
4. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877050913011174>
5. <https://www.eastinitiative.org>
6. <https://www.bentonvillek12.org/ignite>
7. <https://corporate.walmart.com/>





WINTHROP ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE  

---

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SYSTEM