



1400 W. Main St., Jacksonville, AR 72076 (501) 982-1511 FAX (501) 982-1464

March 20, 1996

Donn Walters
Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue (6SF-P)
Dallas, Texas 75202-2733

Dear Mr. Walters:

The Board of Directors of Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce would like to call your attention to several issues related to the cleanup of the Vertac Superfund Site in Jacksonville.

The first issue concerns the economic damage to the City of Jacksonville because of the publicity surrounding the Vertac Site. Before Vertac, Jacksonville was one of the fastest growing cities in Arkansas increasing in population from 19,832 in 1970 to 27,589 in 1980. But the 1990 census showed a population of 29,101. As you can see the population growth dropped from 37% growth in the 70s to a 5% growth in the 80s as the Vertac situation heated up.

During this period of time, the two immediately adjacent cities of Sherwood and Cabot have experienced an economic and population boom. The only factor that distinguishes Jacksonville from both these cities is Vertac. According to the attached article summarizing findings provided by Metroplan, Jacksonville has had 315 new single family houses built since 1990. During the same period, Sherwood has had 460 units and Cabot 1369. A similar statistic shows up regarding multi-family housing units. Since 1990 Jacksonville has had 338 units while Sherwood has had 1027 and Cabot 1449.

Jacksonville has a steady supply of newcomers through the Little Rock Air Force Base located within the city limits. However, negative publicity created by the Vertac situation has led many of these potential citizens to locate in Sherwood or Cabot instead. The positive reputation of a City like Jacksonville is difficult to build and easy to lose. For example, many potential residents were deterred from locating in Jacksonville because they were told that our water supplies were contaminated by Vertac. Of course, our water supplies are largely identical to Sherwood and Cabot. Such rumors are very difficult to combat, and their damage difficult to measure.

The second chart attached to this letter shows Per Capita Retail Sales. This chart is based on information from the Census of Retail Trade, U. S. Department of Commerce. The chart demonstrates that Jacksonville was enjoying strong economic growth during the early 80s while the state of Arkansas was experiencing only modest growth. However, beginning in 1986, Jacksonville's economic growth stalled while the state's growth was increasing. These statistics are very significant because they correlate exactly with the negative publicity created by Vertac and confirm the population and housing trends mentioned above.

Our conclusion from the economic statistics is that the Vertac situation has caused many millions of dollars economic damage to the City of Jacksonville. It is very likely that the economic damage caused the City is greater than the total amount of money to be spent on the cleanup of the Vertac Site.

Secondly, Vertac has had a negative impact on industrial recruiting for Jacksonville. In the past few years, Central Arkansas has become a popular site for major companies wishing to relocate. Little Rock has enjoyed such major expansions as R. & G. Sloane, Rank Video, Southwest Airlines Reservations Center, and many other smaller relocations. Before Vertac, Jacksonville used to get its share of those relocations. Our industrial base consists of over 20 manufacturers, all of whom located in Jacksonville before the Vertac situation. The City took aggressive steps to recruit industry during this time, hiring a full-time industrial recruiter in 1987. Many prospects came to visit, but they all asked, "How far is it to the nearest Superfund site?" None located in Jacksonville.

The Chamber of Commerce and Commerce Corporation are working together to improve our recruiting chances. We have formed a 501(c)3 organization called the Chamber Foundation for the purpose of purchasing 160 acres in our industrial park. On the attached site map, the areas marked in yellow are the industrial properties being purchased. You will note that they surround the Vertac Site. The prime site of 86 acres is immediately adjacent to Vertac.

If the northern 100 acres of the Vertac site is cleaned to the proposed 1 part per billion, we are confident that the property can be useful for our industries. We are eager to have that property donated to the City of Jacksonville so that we can include it in our industrial marketing efforts. Since that property is adjacent to the 86 acres we are purchasing, we would be able to offer a variety of sites utilizing the 86 acres and various portions of the 100 acres. These properties could greatly enhance our recruitment efforts.

The level of cleanup of the Vertac Site is a crucial portion of our industrial marketing efforts. We need to be able to explain in precise, simple, straight-forward terms that the Vertac Site is cleaned up and will present no problems to future industries located at or near the site. The cleanup levels described in the Jacksonville Plan at 5 ppb would certainly be easy to explain to industrial prospects.

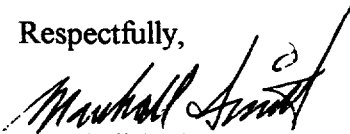
Thirdly, the future use of the land along Marshall Road should be carefully defended. While that property is not currently high on the list of attractive commercial sites, a lot of things can change in thirty years or more. Because of its proximity to Rebsamen Regional Medical Center, the development of that land could become very important to our City in the foreseeable future. The Jacksonville Plan and the agreements reached last summer would provide for the possible reuse of a large portion of the land along Marshall Road. The Supplemental Plan offers a significant change in land-use such that no development would ever be possible along Marshall Road. We are disturbed by the full impact of that phrase "no development would ever be possible." Surely, EPA can foresee the land along Marshall Road should have the "possibility" of commercial development. The location of the fence along this area is critical for future use. We favor placing that fence as far back from Marshall Road as is feasible allowing enough space for future commercial development. //

Fourthly, we are concerned about long-term maintenance of the Vertac Site. If the recommended solution is not a permanent destruction of the contaminants, then long-term maintenance must be assured through strict regulations. We do not want the proposed landfall to fall apart in year 31, after Hercules has been released from long-term responsibility in year 30.

Thank you for allowing the input and recommendations from the citizens of Jacksonville. Please give careful considerations to the economic impact of your recommendations.

This letter has been unanimously endorsed by vote of the Chamber Board of Directors on March 20, 1996, and is signed by President Marshall Smith on behalf of the members of the Board listed below.

Respectfully,



Marshall Smith
President

Members of the Board of Directors of the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce:

Mickey Anders, Executive Director, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce

Greg Bollen, Bollen Dental Clinic

Phillip Carlisle, First Jacksonville Investments

Mike Dietz, Doug Wilkinson Realty

Don Farmer, GTE

Brad Ford, First Electric Cooperative

J. C. George, GEO Consulting

Thad Gray, Bart Gray Realty

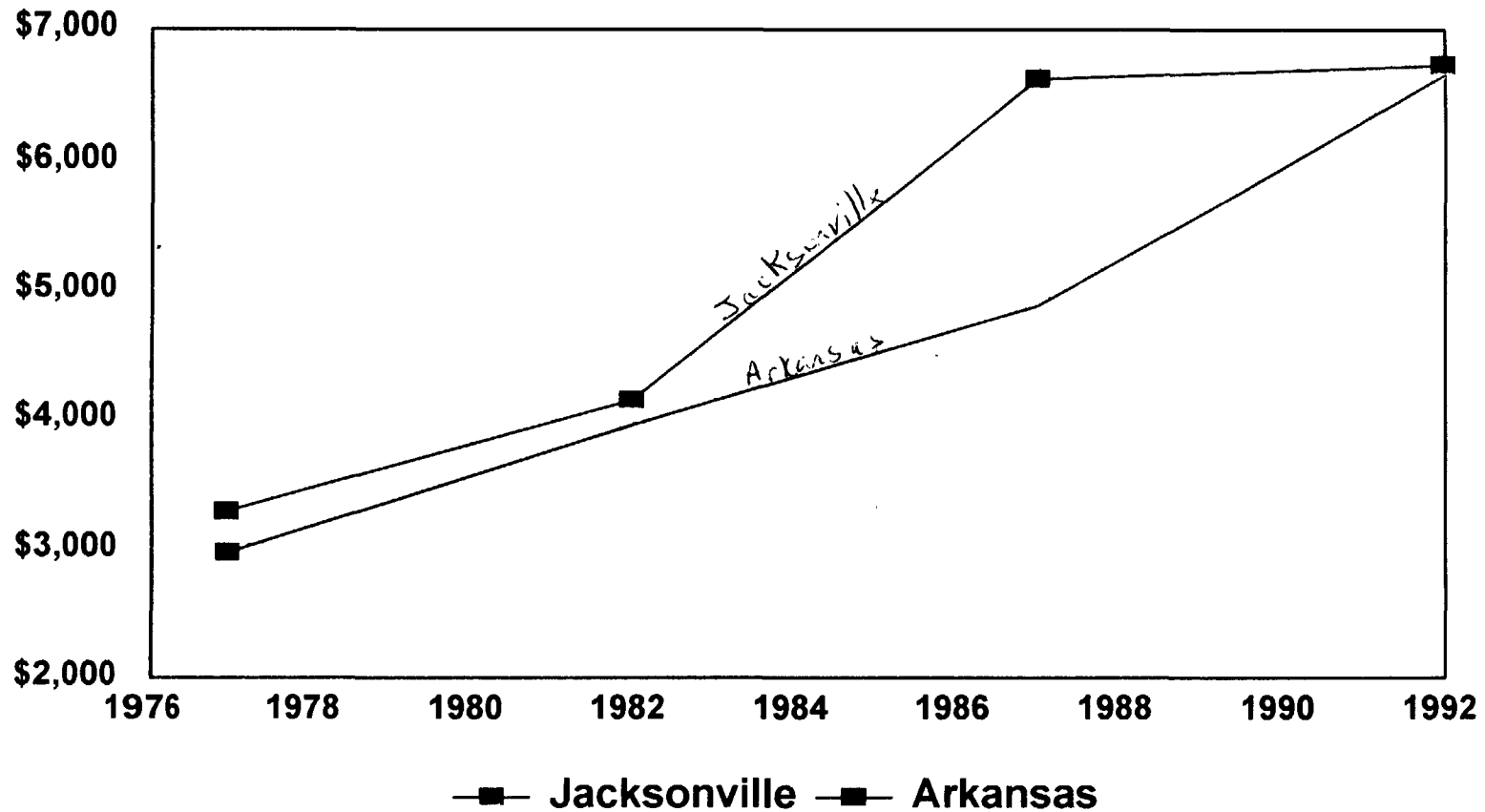
Matha Harris, Bob's Express Lube

Bob Johnson, Bob Johnson CPA

Hank Klein, Arkansas Federal Credit Union

Col. Charles Lambert, Little Rock Air Force Base
Mark Magie, Jacksonville Patriot
Mack McAlister, Mack McAlister CPA
Bruce McFadden, Improved Construction Methods
Mayor Tommy Swaim, Mayor of Jacksonville
Manuel Twillie, North Pulaski High School

Per Capita Retail Sales



Proportion of Total MSA Housing Unit Growth by City

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Little Rock	31.4%	26.1%	33.6%	30.8%	25.8%	29.5%
North Little Rock	4.2%	3.2%	6.3%	4.4%	3.8%	3.2%
Jacksonville	1.8%	1.7%	3.0%	3.3%	3.6%	1.8%
Sherwood	10.6%	4.4%	2.4%	5.0%	3.4%	17.6%
Maumelle	4.3%	2.6%	3.6%	4.4%	5.1%	5.7%
Cabot	8.5%	8.0%	10.2%	9.2%	13.5%	13.9%
Benton	6.0%	10.4%	9.6%	16.7%	8.8%	4.5%
Bryant	11.0%	6.9%	4.6%	2.6%	4.7%	5.1%
Conway	22.2%	36.6%	26.7%	23.7%	31.4%	18.7%

Proportion of MSA SF Housing Growth by City

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Little Rock	33.9%	31.9%	36.6%	36.6%	30.0%	23.8%
North Little Rock	4.8%	4.1%	6.9%	5.3%	4.5%	4.9%
Jacksonville	2.0%	1.8%	3.2%	3.7%	3.8%	2.7%
Sherwood	7.4%	5.4%	2.7%	4.5%	3.3%	4.2%
Maumelle	4.9%	3.3%	3.9%	4.6%	5.8%	8.8%
Cabot	9.7%	10.0%	11.2%	11.1%	13.9%	19.9%
Benton	6.7%	8.6%	8.4%	9.1%	9.1%	6.9%
Bryant	9.4%	8.8%	4.8%	3.1%	5.5%	7.0%
Conway	21.3%	26.1%	22.4%	22.0%	24.1%	21.8%

Proportion of MSA MF Housing Growth by City

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Little Rock	14.0%	4.9%	0.0%	2.6%	4.3%	40.1%
North Little Rock	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Jacksonville	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	1.4%	2.4%	0.1%
Sherwood	33.7%	1.0%	0.0%	7.2%	3.8%	42.6%
Maumelle	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	1.4%	0.0%
Cabot	N/A	0.8%	N/A	0.0%	11.4%	2.7%
Benton	1.1%	17.0%	23.0%	53.6%	7.4%	0.0%
Bryant	22.5%	0.0%	2.7%	0.0%	1.0%	1.5%
Conway	28.7%	74.8%	74.3%	31.7%	68.4%	13.0%

Total MSA Housing Unit Growth

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Little Rock	456	469	603	751	659	907
North Little Rock	61	58	113	107	97	98
Jacksonville	26	31	53	81	92	55
Sherwood	154	80	44	121	86	542
Maumelle	62	47	65	107	130	176
Cabot	123	144	184	224	345	429
Benton	87	188	172	406	225	139
Bryant	159	124	83	63	121	157
Conway	322	659	479	577	803	577

Single-Family Housing Unit Permits

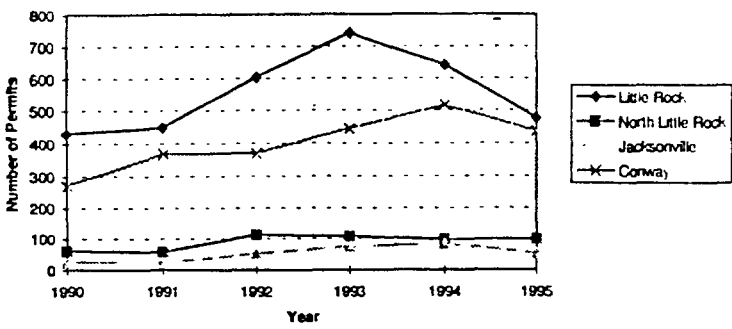
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Little Rock	431	450	603	740	641	477
North Little Rock	61	58	113	107	97	98
Jacksonville	26	25	53	75	82	54
Sherwood	94	76	44	91	70	85
Maumelle	62	47	65	93	124	176
Cabot	123	141	184	224	297	400
Benton	85	122	138	183	194	138
Bryant	119	124	79	63	117	141
Conway	271	368	369	445	515	438
MSA Total (SF)	1272	1411	1648	2021	2137	2007

Multi-Family Housing Unit Permits

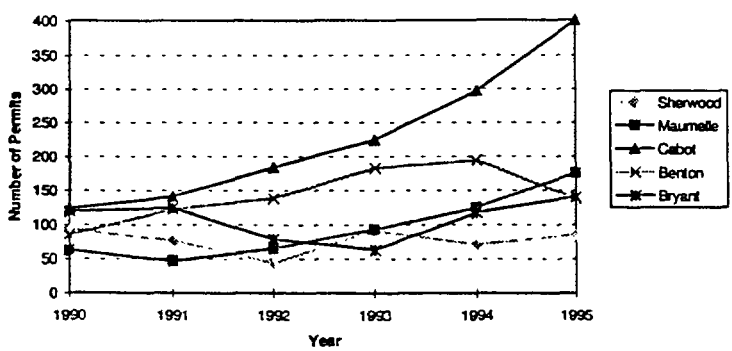
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Little Rock	25	19	0	11	18	430
North Little Rock	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jacksonville	0	6	0	6	10	1
Sherwood	60	4	0	30	16	457
Maumelle	0	0	0	14	6	0
Cabot	N/A	3	N/A	0	48	29
Benton	2	66	34	223	31	0
Bryant	40	0	4	0	4	16
Conway	51	291	110	132	288	139
MSA Total (MF)	178	389	148	416	421	1072
MSA Total (All Housing Units)	1450	1800	1796	2437	2558	3079
% SF	87.7%	78.4%	91.8%	82.9%	83.5%	65.2%
% MF	12.3%	21.6%	8.2%	17.1%	16.5%	34.8%

Graphics courtesy of Metroplan

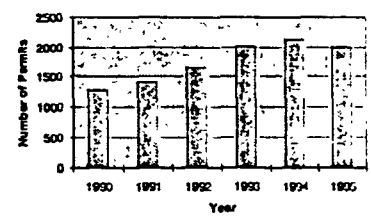
Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA: Annual SF Housing Permits for Four Largest Cities



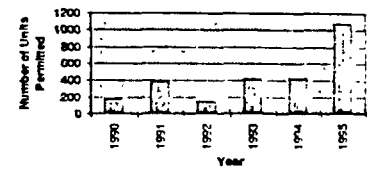
Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA: Annual SF Housing Permits for Smaller Cities 1990-1995



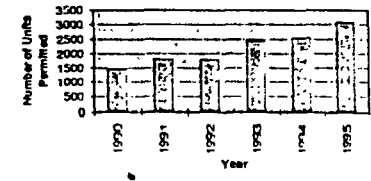
Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA: Total SF Housing Permits 1990-1995



Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA: Total MF Housing Unit Permits 1990-1995



Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA: Total Housing Unit Permits 1990-1995



Home building sluggish here, booming in Cabot

Housing growth in Jacksonville is remaining static, while just up Highway 67-167 to the north Cabot is experiencing a single-family housing boom.

Statistics released Monday by Metroplan reveal that single-family housing permits in Jacksonville have

fallen to 54 in 1995 from 82 in 1994.

That is in line with numbers for the entire Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which encompasses Pulaski, Lonoke, Faulkner, and Saline counties.

The total number of single-family permits issued in 1995 in the MSA is

2,007 according to Metroplan data. That's down from 2,137 the year before.

Cabot is the only city in the Little Rock MSA registering significant growth in 1995 when it comes to single-family dwellings.

Metroplan figures show 400 single-

family housing permits issued in Cabot in 1995, up from 297 the year before.

That represents a growth of 35 percent

Little Rock issued 477 such permits in 1995, down from 641 in 1994. Single-family permits totaled 438 in Conway this past year; 515 the previ-

ous year.

Jacksonville issued just one multi-family permit in '95, down from 10.

The city represented 2.7 percent of the single-family permit growth in the MSA, and 1.8 percent of all housing growth in the region.

Cabot accounted for 19.9 percent

of all single-family permit growth in the MSA in 1995, and 13.9 percent of total housing unit growth.

Jacksonville made up 2.7 percent, lowest in the region, of MSA single-family permit growth, and 1.8 percent of all growth.

(See HOUSING, page 3A)

HOUSING

(Continued from page 1A)

Cabot issued 29 multi-family permits in 1995, down from 48 the previous year.

The total number of single family homes in the MSA is down slightly, from 2,137 to 2,007. Metroplan studies reveal a trend toward multi-family housing.

Multi-housing permits in the MSA rose to 3,079 in '95 from 2,558.

Single-family housing surged in Cabot, Maumelle, Bryant and Sherwood while slowing in the region's larger cities.

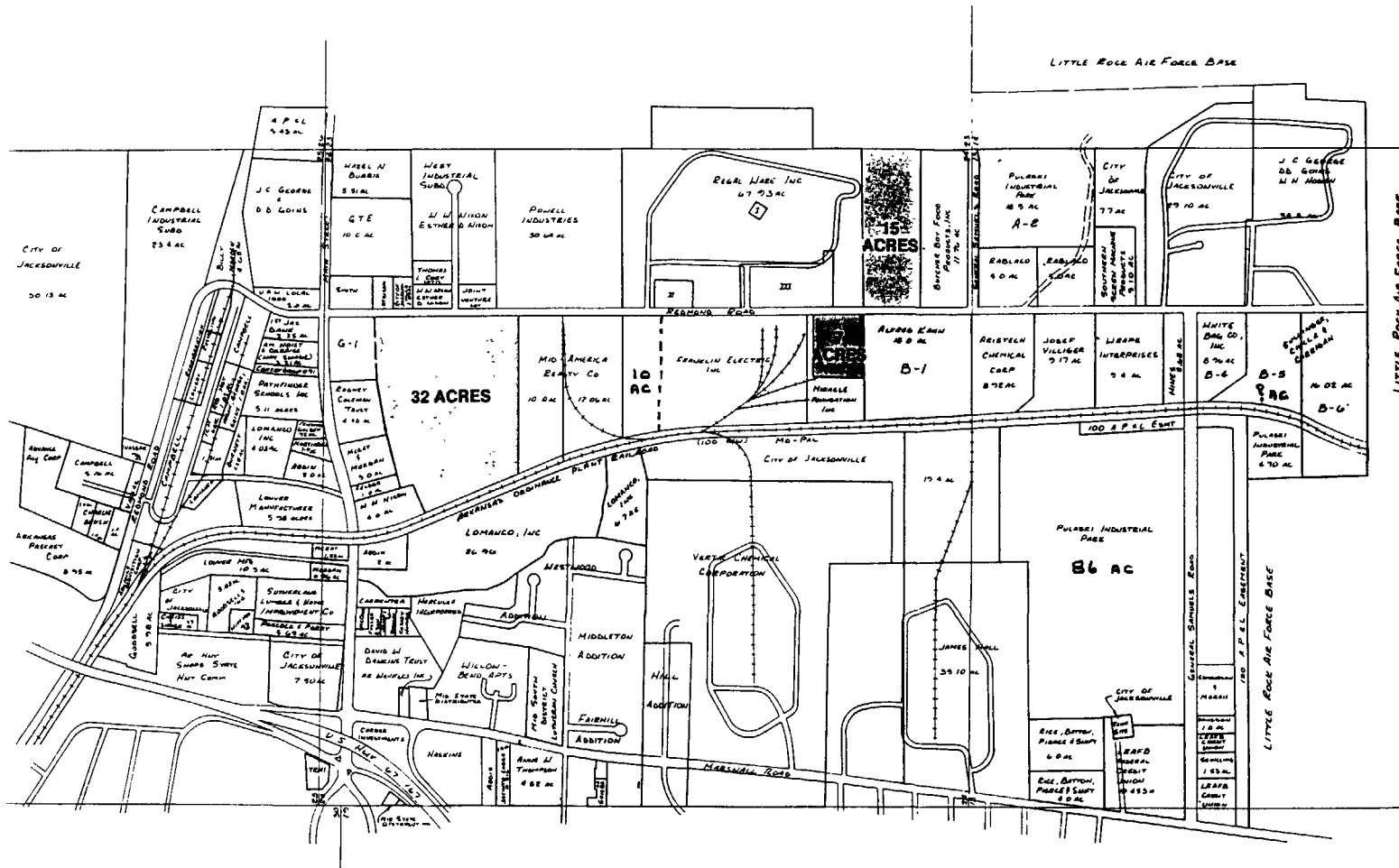
Maumelle's single-family unit growth was an eye-catching 45 percent in 1995, when the city issued 176 permits (up from 124). Bryant and Sherwood each experienced increases of 21 percent in single-family permits.


Metroplan housing figures include only those cities in the MSA with populations over 5,000. The housing data is not guaranteed, as there is no assurance that a unit issued a permit will actually be built.

Metroplan officials noted that counting is especially difficult with multi-family housing, which includes duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. Multi-family housing accounted for 35 percent of housing construction in '95.

Metroplan officials said there is some housing construction taking place in unincorporated areas, particularly Saline County, which is done without permits and therefore without records for generating data.

Metroplan is the council of local governments overseeing the region's transportation needs into the next century.



JOB NO. 273 DRAWN BY TCO CHECKED BY APPROVED BY	 Bond Consulting Engineers 1010 S. Redmond Road Jacksonville, Arkansas	PREPARED FOR RECTOR - PHILLIPS - MORSE 1501 NORTH UNIVERSITY LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS	PULASKI INDUSTRIAL PARK JACKSONVILLE, ARKANSAS	SCALE 1" = 400' DATE JANUARY, 1991 SHEET 01
--	--	--	--	---