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W. Scott Bowen, M.D.
Best Orthopedic Surgeon

David Rhodes, M.D., Finalist,
Best Orthopedic Surgeon

Brad A. Thomas, M.D.
Best Neurologist



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PHOTOS BY LINDA GARNER-BUNCH/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Visitors to Denver Mattress Co. will find a large selection of mattresses and other bedding products. The staff of every location, including in North Little Rock and Conway, works with each customer to find the mattress best suited to his or her needs.



BEST MATTRESS STORE **Denver Mattress Co. >>**

Mattress company helps customers discover the benefits of a good night's sleep

Shopping for a mattress can be a daunting task. After all, most mattresses look basically the same. Other than the price, the average consumer may have trouble determining the subtle differences between various types of mattresses.

The experts at Denver Mattress Co. have a simple goal: to help each customer navigate the maze of mattress types and options and discover the many benefits of a truly good night's sleep — better health and increased immunity to illness, reduced pain, improved mood, clearer thinking and more.

The Denver-based company has locations across the nation, including three in Arkansas: North Little Rock, Conway and Springdale. Each showroom offers a lineup of quality-made mattresses, foundations, frames, bases, pillows, mattress

pads, sheets and mattress-care products.

But the folks at Denver Mattress Co. do more than just sell mattresses. Each store is a factory-direct retailer for the company's own line of top-quality bedding products, said Nick Cooper, manager of the North Little Rock store.

"We're the largest factory-direct mattress retailer in the U.S.," he said. "Not only do we make our own products; we also cut out the middleman markups."

No matter what their price range, customers will discover that they can find a quality mattress at an affordable price at Denver Mattress Co., Cooper said.

But choosing the right mattress is about more than just the price tag — it's about choosing the construction type, firmness level and even the best pillow to provide the ultimate comfort for the individual.

"Everybody is different. What works

for me might not work for the next person who walks into the store," said Ryan Nelson, manager of the company's Conway store. "We focus on taking the time to work with each individual customer and find out what works for them. Sleep is really very important."

In their quest to help others discover better sleep, Denver Mattress Co. staff members use a patented strength-resistance test, or SRT, to determine the best bed for each customer. During this simple test, conducted right in the showroom, the customer lies on a mattress in his or her preferred sleep position (back, side or stomach) while a trained associate determines whether the customer's spine is in alignment.

"The SRT process shows us when you're closest to spinal alignment. This is when your muscles really relax, and you can en-

ter deep sleep," Cooper said. "Once we find out how you sleep and show you a couple of [mattress] options, we incorporate the pillow."

"This is a test where the customer can actually feel when a mattress and pillow are working. When you have the right combination, you can feel it."

Because of this dedication to helping customers enjoy better sleep, teamed with the company's lineup of quality products, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* have voted Denver Mattress Co. as the area's best mattress store for the eighth time in 11 years.

"If you're in the market for a new mattress — for yourself, the kids or the guest room — we'd like to have the opportunity to show you why Denver Mattress Co. was voted the Best Mattress Store in central Arkansas," Nelson said.



ANGIE DAVIS/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Only top-quality meat makes it into Whole Hog Café's cookers. Also, most of the meat is purchased locally.



BEST BARBECUE; BEST BARBECUE RIBS
Whole Hog Café >>

Consistency is key for barbecue success

With world-champion barbecue and a 15-store franchise, Whole Hog Café has come a long way since its beginnings in 2000. Now, it's the customers who are the judge, and Whole Hog Café is the winner of Best Barbecue and Best Ribs as voted by the readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Co-owner Mike Davis, called "Sarge" by his employees, said he and a group of friends got together and organized a championship barbecue team that formed in 1999.

"We started out as a championship barbecue team in the beginning," he said. "Our championship team was called Southern Gentlemen's Culinary Society. Basically, that was just a weekend of fun, going out and drinking a few tasty beverages and going out and seeing if we could compete with the big boys out there in Memphis."

Davis said that since its foundation to today, the team has been across the big stage at Memphis in May for some type of top-10 finish and has had four top-five finishes in those 16 years.

He said he's been keeping with the same philosophy for years, and that's consistency. "Keep It Simple Stupid. K-I-S-S," he said.

The founders of the team were Davis, Ron Blasingame and Steve Lucchi. Blasingame

died in 2009, and his wife, Kathy, and son-in-law, Chris Maynes, have taken over co-owning duties with Davis. Lucchi retired from the business this month.

Davis and Blasingame were both in the military. Davis served in the Army, and Blasingame was in the Marine Corps. Davis said his time in the mess hall has helped him be somewhat military-minded when it comes to recipes.

"When I was in the Army, I ended up in the mess hall for about six months. I actually ended up running the mess hall because the day I signed into the mess hall, all the help left," he said. "The training I received from that — learning how to run the mess hall from scratch and feeding 50 bodies — I had to learn how to requisition food, how to cook for large quantities of people and make it edible. Some of that stuff here, we incorporate into how we made the recipes, how to forecast how much food we're going to cook for each day and things of that nature."

Davis said he thanks the customers so much for voting Whole Hog Café the Best Barbecue and Best Ribs. He said that if it weren't for them, the restaurant wouldn't be where it is today. When customers walk into a Whole Hog Café, he invites them to talk to anyone from the management team and offer feedback.

Dr. Rhys L. Branman

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KELVIN GREEN/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

From left: Estimator Travis Spoon and owners Allison and Pablo Garcia make sure their customers and employees all feel like family, and they're willing to assist anyone in any way they can.



BEST ROOFING COMPANY

Garcia & Son Roofing & Gutters >>

Family values, helping others lead to successful roofing business

Anyone who has been to, or even driven by, Dickey-Stephens Park in North Little Rock, home of the Arkansas Travelers, has seen some of the work that is done by Garcia & Son Roofing & Gutters. Whether it's a big job like this or something smaller, Garcia and Son puts its best effort into every job it does, which is why readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* voted the business the Best Roofing Company.

For Garcia and Son, the philosophy is simple: family and helping others. Allison Garcia, co-owner of the business, said the employees try to work with people as much as possible and stand behind the work they do, sticking to the motto, "The customer is always right."

"We do whatever we have to do to try to make our customers happy," she said. "We use our own crews. They're family members. We know the guys, we know the work, and we pass that on to our customers for quality work. They're the same people that I would use to do my roof."

Allison said the company has given anywhere from major discounts to providing free labor and material for those in need.

She also said the business has even donated roofs to those who weren't able to provide them for themselves. To Garcia & Son, word of mouth is still the most effective way of getting business and getting positive feedback.

Garcia & Son opened in 2000 and has since accumulated numerous awards from "Talk of the Town," Angie's list and the Better Business Bureau. Part of the success comes from co-owner Pablo Garcia and his background. Allison said he instills his past traditions and philosophies in the company today. "Pablo came here as a Mexican immigrant. He's living the American dream," she said. "He still carries those old values to his business and the workers, and they know it."

Allison said it's the employees and the customers who have really been the biggest driving force behind the business.

"We wouldn't be where we are now if it weren't for the workers. I don't think they get thanked enough for all the hard work they do," she said. "[We thank] our customers for voting for us. It makes us drive even harder to be the best because we don't want to let our customers down."



FINALIST: BEST COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY **Arkansas State University-Beebe >>**

Two-year college goes beyond standard education

Nestled in a small town in White County, the hidden gem that is Arkansas State University-Beebe is much more than an average two-year college. ASU-Beebe offers unique programs and opportunities that many colleges of its size don't offer within the state or even the nation. The secret is now out, as the college received its first Best of the Best recognition from the readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* as a finalist for Best College or University.

Nancy Meador, director of marketing and public relations, said the school is grateful for the recognition and that there are some things people may not know about the university.

"We are so excited. We have never been a finalist before. This is really great for a small, two-year college to become a finalist for central Arkansas," she said. "When people think about colleges in Arkansas, there are many of them that are really, really good, and sometimes I think we're kind of like a hidden secret, and our secret is getting out about how affordable we are and also how we have such a good college-life experience on our campus."

Along with being a finalist for Best College or University, ASU-Beebe has also been ranked among the safest colleges in the United States for several years by **StateUniversity.com**.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Arkansas State University-Beebe boasts a unique program called the John Deere Agricultural Technology program that allows students to learn the ins and outs of John Deere equipment and its technology.

com, based on the Clery Act, which requires all colleges and universities that receive federal funding to provide campus crime information to the public.

Meador said the school's mission is "transforming lives through quality learning experiences."

ASU-Beebe Chancellor Eugene McKay said 51.1 percent of the school's students who took remedial classes were successful in completing a certificate or degree or continuing to a four-year university, and that the number ranks second in the state. He said that ASU-Beebe leads the state with an education success rate of 83.3 percent of nonremedial students, according to statistics provided by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

Along with being a two-year college, ASU-Beebe also offers programs that allow students to earn a bachelor's or even a master's degree in Beebe by taking classes on campus through Arkansas State University's main campus in Jonesboro.

The school also offers transfer scholarships that supplement academic scholarships. Students have the opportunity to transfer from ASU-Beebe to any other school in the state and, in most cases, have their schooling paid for at the other university if they have a 3.25 grade-point average or higher at ASU-Beebe.

As the only two-year college in Arkansas with a residence hall, as well as a full 405-acre farm, ASU-Beebe has been recognized by central Arkansas for offering students much more than the average college experience.



Susie Everett & Bo

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BEST AUTO DEALER (NEW); BEST AUTO DEALER (USED) **Everett Buick GMC >>**

Dealership builds on foundation of neighborly relations

For nine years, Everett Buick GMC has sold quality vehicles in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Although the dealership has grown significantly, it has retained its family ownership and community involvement.

This year, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* voted Everett Buick GMC the Best Auto Dealer (New) and the Best Auto Dealer (Used) in the newspaper's annual Best of the Best readers' poll.

"It's an honor, and it feels good to be rewarded for how hard everyone works," part-owner Susie Everett said.

"The success that you have in anything you do in business is the quality of people that you have working with you and building those relationships with the customers," said her husband, part-owner Dwight Everett.

The dealership is a General Motors Mark of Excellence award winner, and it is the only dealership in Arkansas that has won GM's Dealer of the Year award, he said. The business has also been the No. 1 volume Buick GMC dealership in the United States for the past five years, he added.

Everett Buick GMC was the No. 1 volume dealership for all of GM in August and September. "General Motors has been in existence for 106 years, and they've never had

a Buick GMC store that's ever led GM in sales volume before," he said.

As well as the Bryant location, Everett has three dealerships in Northwest Arkansas and an Infiniti dealership in Little Rock, and recently acquired two Toyota dealerships in Texas, he said. Everett also just opened a new facility in Bryant, which gives the service department more room to assist customers, Susie said.

"We've been able to grow, to expand, and a large part of it has to do with how we run the business," Dwight said. Susie stressed the integrity of the dealership's staff and owners.

"I think that being a part of your hometown is a big deal. Our name is out there, and we want that good reputation, and our employees want that good reputation for us. Being here makes everybody more accountable," she said.

When they started the dealership, the couple decided they would commit to community involvement, she said. Among other things, the business gives back through schools, churches, sports teams, bands and clubs.

"We just believe in the community, and the community supports us. We want the place we live to be a better place and hope we can contribute to it," she said.



CODY GRAVES/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
Susie Everett, spokeswoman for and part owner of Everett Buick GMC, stands in front of its new facility in Bryant with her dog, Bo.

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SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Left: Dr. David Rhodes, from left, is a finalist for Best Orthopedic Surgeon; Dr. Scott Bowen is winner of Best Orthopedic Surgeon; and Dr. Brad Thomas was named Best Neurologist in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette's Best of the Best readers' poll. Right: Arkansas Surgical Hospital in North Little Rock is a physician-owned hospital that provides a number of surgical services.



BEST ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON **Scott W. Bowen, M.D.;**
 FINALIST: BEST ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON **David Rhodes, M.D.;**
 BEST NEUROLOGIST **Brad Thomas, M.D. >>**

Local surgeons are a cut above the rest

Three local surgeons stood out among the competition to come out on top in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette's* Best of the Best readers' poll. Dr. Scott Bowen was named Best Orthopedic Surgeon; Dr. Brad Thomas was named Best Neurologist; and Dr. David Rhodes was named as a finalist for Best Orthopedic Surgeon.

Bowen, who is a physician-owner and chairman of the board of managers at Arkansas Surgical Hospital, as well as a partner at OrthoSurgeons, said he is proud of what he and his staff have accomplished.

"It is an honor for our practice [OrthoSurgeons] and Arkansas Surgical Hospital to be recognized by our patients," Bowen said. "We know that Arkansans have many choices when they are making decisions about where to have joint or spine surgery, and we are proud to have been selected Best of the Best by the people who matter most, our patients."

Bowen, who has been in practice for 25 years, said his patients are vital to his practice, and he's even started seeing second- and third-generation patients.

Thomas, physician-owner at Arkansas Surgical Hospital and principal of Little Rock Neurosurgery, said the credit for his win as Best Neurologist goes to his dedicated staffs.

"It's a great honor," he said. "Our teams at Little Rock Neurosurgery and Arkansas Surgical Hospital really deserve the credit. They take great care of patients and families."

Thomas said it is humbling that patients thought of him while voting in the readers' poll. Besides his staff, he said his commitment to providing exceptional and personal care to his patients while making every effort to enhance their health and quality of life is what makes his practice stand apart from others.

"We believe that our patients are individuals who deserve our time and attention so we can provide the best possible outcome for them," he said. "The confidence they place in us is not taken for granted."

Rhodes, physician-owner at Arkansas Surgical Hospital, a partner at OrthoSurgeons and finalist for Best Orthopedic Surgeon, said that because the hospital

is physician-owned, it allows its staff to provide a higher level of care for its patients.

"We can focus on our patients' care as we would if they were members of our own families," he said. "We can extend the quality and values of our practice into the hospital setting, and that is important to us."

Rhodes also praised the staffs at his practice and said he was grateful to be selected as a finalist among his winning colleagues.

"It is rewarding to see patients regain strength and function because of the care they receive from our teams," he said.

Carrie Helm, CEO at Arkansas Surgical Hospital, congratulated Bowen, Thomas and Rhodes for their successes.

"We are proud that three of our surgeons have been named Best of the Best winners and finalist," she said. "This is our second consecutive year to be recognized. It is a result of the hard work of our surgeons and their staffs at the practices and at our physician-owned Arkansas Surgical Hospital."



BEST COSMETIC SURGEON; FINALIST: BEST COMPANY TO WORK FOR <250 **Rhys L. Branman, M.D. >>**

Cosmetic surgeon's personalized care helps patients look their best

Cosmetic surgery, whether it's a nicer nose or smoother skin, can help people feel more confident in their bodies, but the variety of procedures available can be overwhelming. That's why Dr. Rhys L. Branman takes a patient-centered approach to his practice.

"The patient always comes first," Branman said. "We really pride ourselves on giving the best customer service and getting the best results."

This year, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* voted Branman as Best Cosmetic Surgeon in the newspaper's annual Best of the Best readers' poll.

"I'm just really excited about it. It's sort of humbling that patients respect the work I do and appreciate me enough to vote me as Best of the Best. I'm really humbled by the whole experience," he said.

Branman has been with the Cosmetic Surgery Center since 2002. The center itself has been at its west Little Rock location for almost 30 years. The center offers an array of services, from face-lifts to body contouring. One popular procedure is a "mommy makeover," a combination of procedures that aim to reverse the physical changes that accompany motherhood.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Staff members at Dr. Rhys L. Branman's cosmetic surgery center are, from left (top), Courtney Rector; Melinda Stephenson, Branman, Leslie Harmon, (bottom) Monique Stivers, Carolyn Wells and Alicia Smith.

The practice stands out because of Branman's willingness to sit down and listen to his patients in order to understand their needs. Each patient is different, so he prides himself in providing personalized care.

"We don't do a cookie cutter for everyone. Each patient

is treated as an individual, and as an individual, they get an individual treatment plan," he said.

Branman credits his staff for helping secure the award. Everyone at the center plays a role in providing patients with a great experience, from the staff member who answers their initial phone call to the person who guides them through the process of cosmetic surgery. The staff at the Cosmetic Surgery Center have also voted the company as a finalist for Best Company to Work for <250.

"Good staff is invaluable," Branman said. "They truly do care about each patient we have. That's what makes a good business."

The center also gives back to the community in a number of ways. Sometimes, Branman meets with people who have been in accidents but cannot afford surgery to correct the damage. In many cases, the staff does volunteer work for the patient, he said. The center also donates to various charities and participates with Race for the Cure and CARTI events, he added.

Branman knows he's done a good job when patients come back to thank him and tell him about the difference he has made in their lives. "That's the best gift anyone can give me," he said.

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Renata Jenkins Byler, pictured with her husband, Tim, is vice president of marketing and facilities for Roller Funeral Homes and the granddaughter of Denver and Christine Roller, who bought their first funeral home in 1938.



BEST FUNERAL HOME

Roller Funeral Homes >>

Funeral home carries on three generations of family values

For three generations, Roller Funeral Homes has provided respectful, compassionate service to help Arkansas families bid a final farewell to their loved ones.

This year, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* selected Roller Funeral Homes as Best Funeral Home in the newspaper's annual readers' poll.

"It's an honor," said Renata Jenkins Byler, vice president of marketing and facilities for Roller Funeral Homes. "Truly, this award is for our staff and for our co-workers." This is the business's 16th consecutive year to win the award, she said.

Byler is the granddaughter of company founders Denver and Christine Roller. In 1938, they purchased a funeral home that began operations in 1881. Now the business owns 28 funeral homes in Arkansas and Memphis, as well as nine cemeteries and two crematories.

A longtime innovator in the industry, Roller Funeral Homes established the first crematory in Arkansas and was also the first in the state to offer prepaid funerals. In addition, the business provides aftercare for families, including grief groups, a yearly candlelighting ceremony and a newsletter with tips for healing.

"Not only do we take care of the family right here at the funeral, but we've helped them prepare for the funeral, we take care

of the funeral, and then we have our after-care, so it's a three-step process with us," Byler said.

Staff members often include details that make services extra special, she said. They might distribute seed packets in memory of a gardener who died. They have also provided butterfly, dove and balloon releases.

"Really, it's whatever we can do to start the grieving process," she said. "We're here to make sure the living continue to live a healthy life."

The funeral home gives back to the community in a number of ways. The business donates time and funds to various causes, and also provide limos for Camp Aldersgate proms, Byler said. She added that the funeral home has programs that take care of funerals for firefighters and police officers who died in the line of duty, infants who died before their first birthdays, and head ministers of churches.

The Roller name has a good reputation within and outside the industry, she said, adding that staff members show the same level of respect for everyone they work with.

"When you treat everybody with respect, that's what secured the award," she said. "The values have been passed down from generation to generation. That's one reason we continue to receive the award year after year."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Crye-Leike Realtors serves central Arkansas with more than 350 professional sales associates and nine branch offices in Little Rock, North Little Rock, Maumelle, Benton, Bryant, Conway, Cabot and Hot Springs.



BEST REAL ESTATE COMPANY
Crye-Leike Realtors >>

Commitment to service the heart of real estate company's success

Since 2002, when Crye-Leike Realtors opened its first offices in central Arkansas, the company's bright red "For Sale" signs have become a familiar sight for prospective homebuyers throughout the area.

During the past 13 years, Crye-Leike has expanded to include more than 350 sales associates and nine offices devoted to serving central Arkansas, including locations in Little Rock, North Little Rock, Maumelle, Benton, Bryant, Conway, Cabot and Hot Springs.

This year marks the third in a row for the company to be voted central Arkansas' top real estate company by the readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

"We are excited and honored by this recognition," said Johnny McKay, managing broker for Crye-Leike's central Arkansas regional headquarters, located on Kanis Road in west Little Rock. "We appreciate our many central-Arkansas homebuyers and sellers that made this possible."

Crye-Leike Realtors, based in Memphis, Tennessee, was founded in 1977 by Harold Crye and Dick Leike. Today, the company is the nation's fifth-largest real estate company and the largest in the Mid-South. Crye-Leike has more than 3,000 professional sales agents and 138 corporate and franchise offices in nine states, including Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

Part of what sets Crye-Leike's service

apart from the rest is the caliber of its agents.

The central Arkansas team of brokers, sales agents and support staff takes pride in exemplifying Crye-Leike's mission of "a passionate commitment to unsurpassed service," McKay said.

"We have an interview process that all prospective agents go through. We also do career and aptitude testing through our recruiting website," he said.

Realtors affiliated with Crye-Leike strive to personify the company's core values, including hard work, pride, integrity, respect, diversity and being a good neighbor.

"Once here, new agents can take part in our unique training, called Crye-Leike College, and a six-week start-up program, 'Blueprint for Success,'" he said, adding that the company's mentoring program allows new Realtors to learn from successful, more experienced agents.

The company offers the latest in real estate marketing tools, McKay said, including a 24/7 information line for current listings, automatic follow-up programs, an in-house appointment center, virtual home tours, a special "luxury portfolio" program for upper-end properties and more.

"We utilize the latest in real estate information technology and offer our customers one of the best real estate websites in the nation," he said. "Crye-Leike is the No. 1 real estate company in central Arkansas, with a 2014 sales volume that exceeded \$711 million."

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Left: Eddy Luster, from left, AT&T retail sales manager; Samantha Wolfe, AT&T retail sales consultant; and Marion King, AT&T area retail sales manager; are ready to help customers at AT&T's new Bass Pro Shopping Center location. Right: AT&T's new Bass Pro Shopping Center location has the latest in smartphone and tablet accessories.



BEST MOBILE PHONE SERVICE **AT&T >>**

Mobile phone service rings true for customers

With a fast network, nationwide coverage and outstanding customer support, AT&T continues to be a favorite with Arkansas customers.

Once again, the mobile phone carrier was selected by readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* as Best Mobile Phone Service in the newspaper's Best of the Best readers' poll.

"At AT&T, we're bringing it all together. We're helping people connect with advanced mobile services, next-generation TV, high-speed Internet services and smart solutions for businesses," said Jan Collier, AT&T vice president and general manager for AT&T Arkansas and Oklahoma.

AT&T helps millions around the globe connect with leading entertainment, mobile, high-speed Internet and voice services. As the world's largest provider of

pay TV, AT&T has TV customers in the U.S. and 11 Latin American countries. In the U.S., AT&T's wireless network has the nation's strongest 4G LTE signal and most reliable 4G LTE, she said.

"Our customers can stay connected from virtually anywhere. It doesn't matter if they're driving home from work, around Arkansas or headed across the country. Our leading wireless services offer customers the nation's strongest LTE signal and the nation's most reliable 4G LTE network," Collier said.

Across the country, AT&T is investing billions to build the advanced networks that will create jobs and fuel economic growth, and over the past six years, AT&T has invested more capital into the U.S. economy than any other public company, she said. From 2012 through 2014, AT&T invested nearly \$600 million in the wireless and wired networks in Arkansas to improve the speed, service and ex-

perience for consumers and businesses statewide.

AT&T recently opened three fully redesigned retail stores in Central and Northwest Arkansas, providing a premiere experience for customers to see AT&T's brand come to life. Those locations include the Promenade at Chenal in west Little Rock, Bass Pro Shopping Center in southwest Little Rock and Creekside Shopping Center in Rogers.

The new stores are the latest evolution of AT&T's company-owned retail store design, which breaks the mold of traditional telecom retailing by shifting focus to how technology helps enable people's lives.

"Our retail experience embodies the spirit of AT&T's 'Mobilizing Your World' tagline, with immersive product experiences and engaging displays that feature everything customers need to support their mobile lifestyle," Collier said. The new store design replaces traditional signage with

video boards, which can show customers how AT&T's technology can help them live their lives. Collier said AT&T's new store design eliminates counters and cash registers, making for a more personalized and consultative interaction.

"We're also improving lives by supporting our local communities. We want to raise high school graduation rates and prepare students for college and careers through our signature education initiative, AT&T Aspire. To date, we have committed \$350 million to the program," Collier said. "And AT&T's 'It Can Wait' campaign has inspired more than 7 million people to pledge that they will never text and drive."

Additional information about AT&T products and services is available at www.att.com. Follow the company's news feeds on Twitter at @ATT, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/att and YouTube at www.youtube.com/att.



BEST VAPOR STORE **A Vape Life >>**

Mom-and-pop atmosphere and vapor help smoke competition

Smoking cessation can be empowering, and for Michelle Stewart, helping others to quit smoking was her calling. After switching from cigarettes to vapor, she decided she wanted to open her own vape store. She did so with her husband, Brandon Stewart, in March 2014.

The story doesn't end there. A Vape Life has grown exponentially in business since its founding. The business has had to move to a bigger location and has met the demands of keeping the latest products at the most competitive prices. Michelle said she and her husband were excited when they received the news that A Vape Life had won Best Vapor Store, as voted by readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

"[We were] ecstatic. When we found out, I felt like I won a million bucks," she said. "I was pretty excited, just because we have so many competitors, and some have other stores."

Brandon said it's the ultimate accomplishment for the couple to have won the award, having just one store. He said they pride themselves on the store's comfortable atmosphere.

"It's got that mom-and-pop atmosphere, the old-school

mom-and-pop culture," he said. "We're a family business, and even our employees, we try not to consider them employees — we think of them as family."

The couple said that even though the other stores in the area are technically their competitors, Michelle still thinks of them as part of the same community that is trying to help others quit smoking. The two said they will even send people to other stores if they happen to be out of a certain product and the customer needs it immediately.

Michelle said there is one thing about the business that sets it apart from others.

"We price-match; nobody else does that," she said.

She added that the store commonly has the best prices, but that the price-matching definitely makes the business unique and is an added bonus for people who want to come to the shop.

With Brandon being in the military and Michelle being prior military, they make sure they're giving back to the community by sponsoring various events when asked, as well as giving major discounts to people serving in the military, police personnel and firefighters.

A Vape Life is proud to give its employees and customers



WILLIAM HARVEY/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

From left: Owner Brandon Stewart, manager Jeff Donaldson and owner and former cigarette smoker Michelle Stewart take pride in helping their customers quit cigarettes by switching to vapor.

the feeling that they're part of the Stewart family, making sure to invite them into their shop and answering late-night calls to come in when needed.

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KELVIN GREEN/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Senior associate Tina King and general manager James Staats make their best effort to keep customers happy while retaining the best possible staff.



FINALIST: BEST ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BUFFET
Golden Corral >>

Long-lasting employees crucial for buffet's success

Golden Corral as a whole, and specifically the North Little Rock location, thinks of employee longevity as one of its secrets to being successful and to being voted a finalist in the All-You-Can-Eat Buffet category by the readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. The location includes 40 employees who have been with the business for 10 years or longer, many managers who have been with the restaurant for 12 years, a general manager with more than 18 years with the company and a senior associate with 21 years at Golden Corral.

Along with longevity, general manager James Staats said the variety and freshness of food have kept customers coming back.

"We owe a lot to the fact that we've been able to keep our staff. Every manager here, except for me, was promoted from inside the restaurant," he said. "One of the things that's changed with Golden Corral over the years that I've been here is how much stuff we make from scratch. We don't do a lot of frozen. Our hands touch almost everything."

He also said the work the employees do in the community has enabled them to connect with so many people that the list of charities and events the business helps with is too long to mention them all.

"We're really, really involved and plan on

staying that way as long as we can," Staats said.

He included that because of the heavy involvement with Golden Corral in the community with organizations such as Special Olympics, Race for the Cure and Arts and Hooves, the North Little Rock location has won the community service award within the Golden Corral company 10 times. This means he and his staff were No. 1 out of 508 restaurants.

Feeding about 15,000 people per week, Golden Corral in North Little Rock must ensure that its staff is highly trained on the procedural, sanitary and safety methods of the company. Staats said this is one thing that sets them apart.

"Our training program is one of the best in any of the major restaurant chains," he said.

He said that within three days of hiring, the employees must go through videos describing general procedures to be carried out while also watching videos for their specific positions in how to remain safe and clean within the restaurant.

It's no wonder that Golden Corral of North Little Rock was voted a finalist in the All-You-Can-Eat Buffet category when you consider that Golden Corral has been the restaurant with the top-grossing-sales in Arkansas for the past five years.



JENNIFER ELLIS/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
Edward Jones financial advisers make every effort to build one-on-one relationships with clients, offering personalized attention and financial guidance. Barbara Tripp, senior branch office administrator, is shown at the Little Rock location.



BEST FINANCIAL PLANNER
Edward Jones >>

Individual focus puts investment firm on top

When thinking of financial planners, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* chose Edward Jones as the Best Financial Planner in central Arkansas in the newspaper's Best of the Best readers' poll.

Edward Jones, headquartered in St. Louis, is one of the nation's most convenient suppliers of financial-service products for individual investors. The company is one of the only firms to serve individual investors exclusively and has nearly 7 million clients.

With more than 11,000 offices in all 50 states, Edward Jones has more branch offices than any other brokerage firm in the country.

The firm was founded in 1922 by Edward D. Jones Sr. After working a rural territory in Missouri and Illinois, Ted Jones, the son of the founder, positioned the company in the increasingly competitive marketplace as a specialist

in providing investment advice to individual investors. In the 1970s, though, the firm realized that the appeal of Edward Jones was not based on geography. Rather, the firm appealed to a certain kind of investor anywhere. In the 1980s, the firm began expanding into metropolitan areas, starting with Chicago and Dallas.

Edward Jones financial advisers come from all walks of life — they are former engineers, attorneys, teachers, bank presidents, military officers and students. Although many of the company's offices are in rural communities, Edward Jones has developed a strong presence in metropolitan areas like Little Rock. The firm has grown to more than 11,000 offices, and to support this growth, the firm has created a nationally recognized training program for its financial advisers. The firm continues to place these well-trained financial advisers in communities where they can serve the needs of individual investors.

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BEST ORTHODONTIST **David Wardlaw, D.D.S., M.S. >>**

Orthodontist builds lifelong relationships and beautiful smiles

For 55 years, a Wardlaw has been straightening teeth in central Arkansas. Wardlaw Orthodontics, which has seen two Wardlaws over the decades, strives to provide its patients with great results in a comfortable atmosphere.

This year, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* have selected David Wardlaw as Best Orthodontist in the newspaper's annual Best of Central Arkansas readers' poll.

"It feels great," Dr. David Wardlaw, owner of Wardlaw Orthodontics, said. "We're so thankful for our patients, and we're thankful that they reach out and acknowledge that we're doing good work that they feel good about."

He is now treating children of some former patients, he said. The practice also is in its second generation. Wardlaw began practicing orthodontics in 1989, when he joined his father, Dr. Fay Wardlaw, who practiced from 1960 until his retirement in 1997.

Wardlaw said his staff is incredibly important to the business. "There's a lot of experience here," he said. "We've all been together for so long that we truly value each other as people, as well as co-workers."

Wardlaw Orthodontics treats adults and children. It recently moved toward more discreet orthodontic methods

in response to public demand, he said. That includes using ceramic brackets and Teflon-coated wires that disappear against teeth, as well as Invisalign.

"We are constantly on the search for better ways to deliver what we do, both from an office-environment standpoint as well as the technical details of the treatment," he said.

Atmosphere is key, he added. "I just think in dentistry, in general, it's very nice if you can try to put people at ease and make them comfortable," he said. His homey patient lounge gives people a place to relax, and patients receive a full explanation of the procedures before they are treated, he said.

Wardlaw said he gives back to the community through charitable donations, but that the project closest to his heart is the Winston Penn Wardlaw Scholarship Fund, which he created in honor of his son, who died five years ago.

The fund allows boys who cannot afford tuition to attend Catholic High School. It is benefited by a yearly event called Winfest. Wardlaw and his son both attended the school, and Wardlaw recently was elected Alumnus of the Year there, he said.

"It's one of my passions, because it keeps my son's memory alive and it does some tangible good," he said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dr. David Wardlaw has practiced orthodontics since 1989, when he joined his father's business. His father worked as an orthodontist from 1960 to 1997.

Thank You

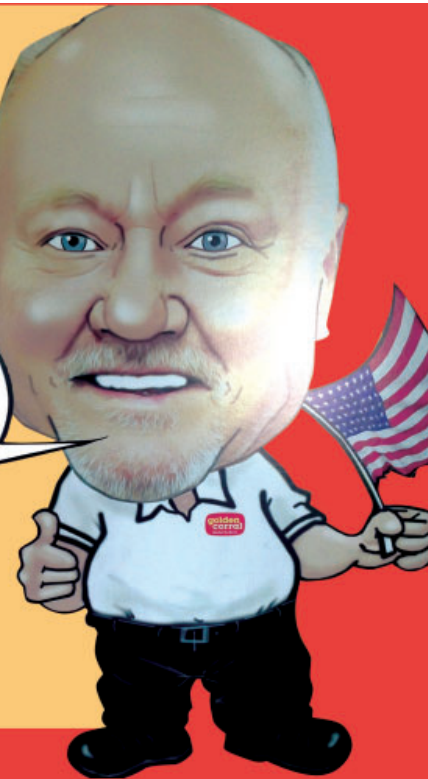
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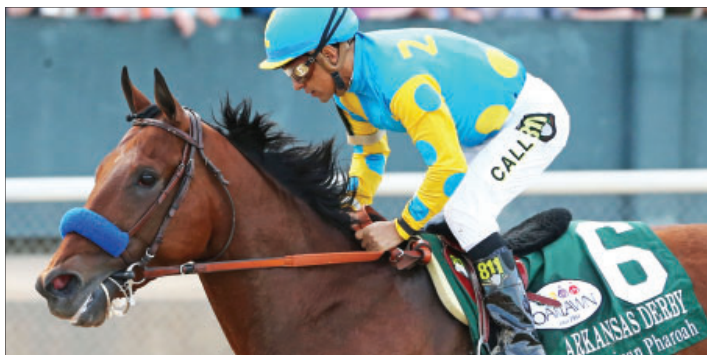
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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Before winning the Triple Crown this year, American Pharoah won the Arkansas Derby at Oaklawn Racing & Gaming in Hot Springs.



BEST GAMBLING CENTER OR CASINO
Oaklawn Racing & Gaming >>

Hot Springs racetrack and gaming center boasts record-breaking season

With some of the most exciting thoroughbred racing in the country and a new expansion, one Arkansas destination is creating new and exciting experiences for its visitors.

Oaklawn Racing & Gaming in Hot Springs has been selected as Best Gaming Center or Casino by readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in its annual Best of the Best readers' poll.

"For 112 years, the name Oaklawn has been known worldwide as one of the premier destinations for thoroughbred racing in the United States, but our challenge has been developing that same reputation and brand loyalty on the gaming side," said Eric Jackson, general manager. "Earning back-to-back Best of the Best awards for our gaming center shows our commitment to offering outstanding customer service while capitalizing on our location in Hot Springs, a national park community, year-round."

Jackson said that what separates Oaklawn from other nearby gaming centers are the quality entertainment and some of the biggest names in horse racing.

"We may not be allowed to do everything our competitors can," he said. "But, they don't have a marquee that features names ranging from American Pharoah to Michael Bolton, right in the middle of a resort community."

opened almost a year ago. The \$20 million expansion added many new gaming tables, a high-limit area and two restaurants: Silks Bar & Grill and Bistro 2705. The expansion also added an entrance to the park, a gift shop, 18,000 square feet of gaming space and substantial back-of-house support facilities. The expansion was a response to the increased popularity of Oaklawn's gaming facilities. This was the second significant expansion to Oaklawn since 2009.

The park also is gearing up for another record-breaking year. After the highest purses in Oaklawn history this season, the park is raising purses for 2016. Oaklawn, where American Pharoah launched the first successful Triple Crown campaign in 37 years, has made several enhancements to its 2016 stakes schedule — most notably increasing the purse of the March 19 Rebel Stakes from \$750,000 to \$900,000. American Pharoah won both the Rebel and the \$1 million Arkansas Derby on his way to the Triple Crown. Oaklawn will honor American Pharoah with a bobblehorse giveaway on Jan. 18, Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Oaklawn's 2016 live meet begins Jan. 15 and continues through April 16. The highlight of the season again will be the Racing Festival of the South, which runs April 9-16 and features nine stakes worth \$3,650,000. The 2016 season will be the richest purse distribution in the history of Oaklawn, with \$27 million allotted for the season.

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SARAH DECLERK/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Tarek Shehadeh and Falon Vela are co-owners of the Bar Louie locations in Little Rock and North Little Rock.



BEST BAR/HAPPY HOUR, FINALIST: BEST SPORTS BAR,
FINALIST: BEST COCKTAIL

Bar Louie >>

Bar serves handmade delights in comfortable atmosphere

Bar Louie has served handcrafted cocktails and made-from-scratch meals in west Little Rock for five years. Now with a location in North Little Rock, the business has developed quite a following.

This year, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* selected Bar Louie as Best Bar/Happy Hour, as well as a finalist for Best Sports Bar and a finalist for Best Cocktail in the newspaper's annual Best of the Best readers' poll.

"We're ecstatic," said Tarek Shehadeh, co-owner and director of operations. "We want to thank our voters, ... and we're excited about being the place for happy hour."

The first Bar Louie opened more than 20 years ago in Chicago. The Pleasant Ridge Town Center location opened in June 2010 and recently extended its patio. In May, a location opened in McCain Mall.

"Our mission statement is 'eat, drink and be happy,' and we live by that," Shehadeh said. "We have a dynamic beer selection, great drinks and a very comfortable atmosphere where, above all, people have a great time with old friends while making new ones."

He added that the family-oriented restaurant welcomes children. Its menu includes something for everyone, from health-conscious salads to indulgent nachos, and the menu changes every six to eight weeks. All the food is made fresh, he said.

Bar Louie also provides craft cocktails

and a rotating selection of beers, including local favorites such as Diamond Bear and Lost Forty. Happy hour takes place from 4-7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"One thing that makes our happy hour stand out is our scratch kitchen," Shehadeh said, adding that flatbreads and six appetizers are half off during happy hour. Other specials include \$3.25 draft beers, \$4.25 glasses of wine and \$5.25 martinis.

The restaurant also serves brunch from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Specials include complimentary homemade doughnut holes with chocolate or vanilla dipping sauces, build-your-own omelets, lobster-cake Benedict, yogurt and granola, and \$2 mimosas.

Bar Louie also offers weekly specials. It sells \$5 burgers from 5 p.m. until close on Tuesdays. On Wednesdays, the establishment boasts live music and \$6 buckets of five Budweiser products. Thursdays are ladies nights, when wine bottles and signature martinis are half off. The kitchen stays open late into the night.

"We're huge on giving back to the community," Shehadeh said. The business is active in the No Kid Hungry campaign and recently donated food for the American Heart Association's Festival of Wines.

Bar Louie will host the Arkansas Ale Run at Pleasant Ridge Town Center at 2 p.m. Nov. 22. The event benefits the ALS in Wonderland Foundation.



FINALIST: BEST PET STORE **Hollywood Feed >>**

Store educates, helps owners give pets the star treatment

Hollywood Feed first opened in Memphis, Tennessee, but new locations have sprung up in several states, including Arkansas. The business offers quality pet products, and it also educates its customers about pet care and nutrition.

This year, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* selected Hollywood Feed as a finalist for Best Pet Store in the newspaper's annual Best of the Best readers' poll.

"We are honored," said Shawn Tait, regional manager for the Little Rock and North Little Rock stores. "I managed [the Little Rock] store for about three years, and the community accepted Hollywood Feed wonderfully. It's been a great experience."

The business strives to educate the public, use products and food to better the lives of animals and their pet parents, and help pets live the longest, happiest lives possible, he said. It offers pet food, toys, chews, bedding and more.

"Our stores smell nice and we keep them really clean, and we have a very classy feel to our stores," Tait said.

"We pride ourselves highly on customer service," he added. The staff undergoes extensive training, including nutritional training, so employees can answer customer

questions. "If the customer has the time, we take the time to find the answer if we don't know the answer," he said.

Customers do not have to pay top dollar for quality pet food, either. Some brands have programs in which customers get a free bag after a set number of purchases. The company also checks competitors' prices to make sure it can beat local and online stores, he said.

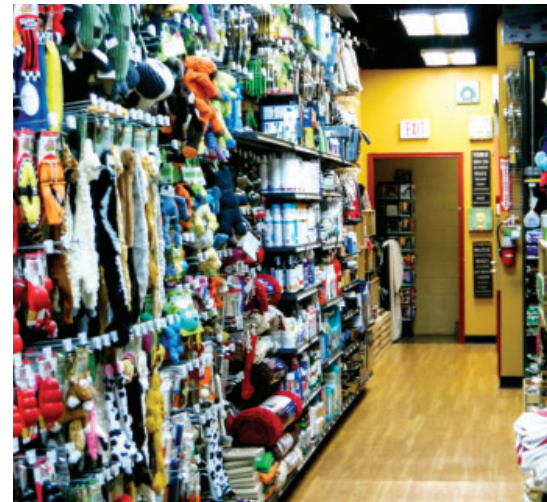
"If [customers] do find a better price, we'll match it," he said.

Hollywood Feed also guarantees its products. If the pet or owner is not satisfied with a purchase, the store will refund or replace it, he said. After returned items are inspected, the business distributes them locally through fostering programs and shelters, he added.

"We also help at fundraising events," he said. "We're always recommending different ways for customers to get involved, also, and spreading the word and educating the public about what it means to own a pet."

The Little Rock store opened about four years ago, and the North Little Rock location opened a year later, he said. Another store will open in November on Chenal Parkway.

"We're all pet lovers," Tait said. "Some people bring their pets to work, so it's a really nice atmosphere for all."



SARAH DECLERK/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Hollywood Feed opened in Little Rock four years ago, and the North Little Rock location opened a year later. A Chenal Parkway location will open in November, regional manager Shawn Tait said.

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CODY GRAVES/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Charles "Skip" Davidson, owner and managing partner of Davidson Law Firm in Little Rock, said the professionalism of his employees is what makes his business a success.



FINALIST: BEST ATTORNEY
Charles 'Skip' Davidson >>

Local lawyer praises dedication of hardworking staff

Charles "Skip" Davidson said the success of his law firm is the result of the hard work of all his employees, from the receptionist to his fellow attorneys.

Davidson Law Firm in Little Rock has been chosen as a finalist for Best Attorney in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette's* Best of the Best readers' poll.

"It's kind of humbling," said Davidson, owner and managing partner. "I don't get to be judged the best just on my own effort. It takes a lot of people. We have a lot of great clients, support staff and other lawyers, and we generally work as a team, so our success is a team effort."

Davidson's firm handles a variety of practice areas for businesses and individuals, including bankruptcy, contract negotiation, real estate, divorce and many more. He said one of the greater rewards of his practice is seeing the success of those he represents.

"Some of our clients are now second generation, maybe even third generation, of running businesses that we've represented," he said. "It makes me proud of my clients' success over several generations and the fact that people call us every day for help."

Davidson Law Firm was founded in 1973 and has grown into one of the leading law firms in the state. The firm now has offices in Little Rock, Conway, Hot Springs and Hot Springs Village.

With more than 40 years in practice, Davidson said he and his team have the skills, experience and understanding to assist their clients with their legal needs. The staff also makes the effort to explain things in terms the client can understand, from the initial visit until the case is closed.

"By working hard and helping people through those legal challenges and opportunities and helping them understand the legal processes, whether it's buying a business, foreclosing on a piece of property or a contract suit, it's [about] helping them understand," he said.

Davidson also praised members of his staff and the hard work they do for their clients. He said that while his name is on the door, he understands that the staff's dedication is what makes his firm one of the best.

"The staff is critical to the overall success because everybody is good at something, and everybody can't be good at everything," he said. "So we are able to divide up the tasks based on the particular individual."



CODY GRAVES/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Randy Breece has played a crucial role in designing the layout and landscape of the patios for U.S. Pizza Co., helping the business win Best Patio Dining.



BEST PIZZA, BEST SALAD, BEST PATIO DINING
U.S. Pizza Co. >>

U.S. Pizza reigns supreme, winning trio of awards due to family and tradition

The family of 305 employees dedicated to customer service and putting out the best product possible is what makes U.S. Pizza Co. special. The Arkansas-based business was voted as the winner of Best Pizza, Best Salad and Best Patio Dining by the readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, showing that U.S. Pizza employees are indeed working hard.

Drew Weber, chief operating officer of U.S. Pizza, said the entire company is family-based, which creates an environment where people want to work and where people want to stay.

“We’ve been doing this since 1972. There’s a level of care and compassion for this company and the things we do,” he said. “Our people are proud to wear their T-shirts outside and have people say, ‘Oh, I love your salads!’”

Judy Waller-Breece started the company in 1972 and still owns it. Her husband, Randy Breece, designs the buildings and the patios for U.S. Pizza.

Weber said the goal of the company is to maintain employee focus and for that group to continue to succeed.

“Our mission is to grow our employee family and to take care of them,” he said.

“Our concept as a corporation is that our employees come first because without our employees, we can’t open our doors. We can’t do anything. We’ve had people in this company that have worked for us for 18 years.”

When it comes to the food, U.S. Pizza uses recipes that have been the same for more than 40 years. Weber said the key to the company producing good food comes down to tradition and quality.

“The pizza crust has been the same for 43 years. We try to serve the best possible ingredients we can,” he said. “Our philosophy is that we don’t use scales. We don’t sit back there and measure the amounts. Our goal is that if you order something with 10 ingredients on it, every time you take a bite, you taste every single ingredient.”

He said the same can be said for the salad, and that the customers have influenced the Salad Supreme. He said it began with a few ingredients but that customers have added more and more, evolving the salad to become what it is today.

Weber said the company is excited to win the awards this year. He said U.S. Pizza has often won Best Pizza or Best Salad, but that to win all three is great.

2015 Best of the Best
 Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

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BEST GREEK RESTAURANT **Taziki's Mediterranean Café >>**

Local Greek eatery celebrates anniversary

When it comes to Mediterranean cuisine, Taziki's Mediterranean Café has been keeping central-Arkansas diners satisfied for nearly a decade.

The restaurant has been named Best Greek Restaurant by readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in its Best of the Best readers' poll.

The restaurant is celebrating its seven-year anniversary this year, and Jim Keet, CEO, said it has been a unique honor to serve the people of central Arkansas, as well as expand the business with his family.

"It is such a privilege and blessing to work with my sons, daughter-in-law and terrific staffs who genuinely care about our guests," he said.

Taziki's, which has four locations in central Arkansas, serves more than 100 items that are made in-house daily. It's this quality and dedication to providing outstanding Greek food that the owners believe keep people coming back for more.

"What an honor to have our hard work rewarded with the kind words of our customers and friends year after year," said Tommy Keet, president of JTJ Restaurants LLC and the son of Jim Keet.

Jim Keet opened the first Arkansas Taziki's location in

2008 on Cantrell Road. Since then, the Keet family has expanded the franchise with a location on Chenal Parkway, as well as restaurants in North Little Rock, Conway, Fayetteville and Bentonville.

"We feel incredibly blessed to have won Best Greek in the state for half a decade," said Jake Keet, vice president of JTJ Restaurants LLC. "The last seven years have flown by, and we have made some great friendships while expanding our business."

In addition to Taziki's signature gyro sandwiches, customers may choose from selections such as hummus or Taziki dip with pita, dolmades (stuffed grape leaves), a variety of deli sandwiches and taste-tempting salads, and "feast" platters, including grilled chicken, beef, lamb, seafood and more.

While the food may be the thing that gets people in the door, Jake said, it's the staff at each location that makes his restaurants stand out from the competition.

"It is great to actively employ over 100 Arkansans," he said.

With the dramatic growth of Taziki's over the past seven years, Jim, Jake and Tommy were named in the Power 20 List by *Restaurant Business* magazine in 2015.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jim Keet, standing from left, CEO; Tommy Keet, president of JTJ Restaurants LLC; and Jake Keet, vice president of JTJ Restaurants LLC; and Holden Keet, front, celebrate the seven-year anniversary of Taziki's.



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LISA Academy has two campuses — one in Sherwood and another in west Little Rock. Currently serving 1,500 students, both campuses operate with the goal of preparing their graduates to excel in the college setting and beyond.



FINALIST: BEST CHARTER SCHOOL
LISA Academy >>

College, career readiness top priorities for central-Arkansas charter school

LISA Academy has been a leading central-Arkansas charter STEM-focus school with an emphasis on college and career readiness since 2004. This focus has brought the readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* to select LISA Academy as a finalist for Best Charter School in the Best of the Best Readers' Choice poll once again.

"LISA Academy's selection as a finalist for Best Charter School indicates the educational value parents feel that [their children] are receiving," said Atnan Ekin, superintendent of LISA Academy.

LISA Academy currently has two campuses serving 1,500 students in Sherwood and west Little Rock. Both operate with the goal of preparing their graduates to excel in the college setting and beyond.

Recently, the school introduced a new honors graduation plan that allows students who have completed high-school-level courses in middle school to begin taking Advanced Placement courses starting in the ninth grade, and up to 21 AP courses throughout high school, an opportunity for early graduation and to be recipients of an AP Capstone diploma.

There might also be some beneficial changes to the school system on the horizon. An amendment proposal submitted to the Arkansas Department of Education requests a combined high school and the addition of a new elementary school in Little Rock on Shackleford Road.

This new configuration will enable LISA North to focus entirely on elementary- and middle-level education, and LISA West will provide families with an elementary-school option located near the current west campus.

A combined high school aims to increase academic success for graduates. If the state Board of Education approves this amendment, it will be implemented in the 2016-2017 school year.

Ekin said LISA Academy is unique because of three distinct categories: parental-involvement promotion; intensive and flexible tutoring opportunities; and an online database tracking system that allows parents to track students' performance through a mobile application.

"All of these factors, combined with a hardworking staff and supportive parent network, set LISA Academy apart from all other charter schools in the area," Ekin said. "As an active part of the child's education, the teacher, parents and students work as a triad to achieve the success demanded by the Common Core and Ivy League colleges."

In April, LISA Academy initiated the first Arkansas STEM Festival on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The festival paves the way for students in Arkansas to present their growing knowledge in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) field. The second annual Arkansas STEM Festival will be held on the UALR Campus on Feb. 26.

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BEST COSMETIC DENTIST **C. Lee Wyant, D.D.S. >>**

Creating beautiful smiles, improving dental health is goal of Little Rock dentist

Since 2002, Arkansans have trusted their teeth to Dr. C. Lee Wyant, owner and founder of Smile Arkansas in west Little Rock. Wyant and his team of professionals offer a full range of services, from general dentistry to cosmetic solutions.

"Someone who is interested in improving their smile has many options," Wyant said. "The key is finding the right office that will listen to your concerns and have the experience and skill to give you the results you're looking for."

The most commonly requested solutions, Wyant said, are "no prep" porcelain veneers and Invisalign, a method of teeth-straightening that uses removable plastic aligners instead of traditional wires and brackets.

"We believe everyone deserves to enjoy the benefits of good dental health and a great smile," said Wyant, who is one of only 65 cosmetic dentists in the United States — and the only one in Arkansas — to be awarded Accredited Fellowship status by the American Board of Cosmetic Dentistry.

A graduate of Louisiana State University's School of Dentistry, Wyant has completed post-graduate programs at LSU and the Baylor College of Dentistry and has practiced



CODY GRAVES/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
The team at Smile Arkansas includes, from left, Ruth Quick, practice coordinator; Whitney Robinson, dental hygienist; Dr. C. Lee Wyant; Kelley Rasco, dental hygienist; and Jasmine Miller, certified dental assistant.

cosmetic and comprehensive restorative dentistry in central Arkansas since 1982.

As testament to Wyant's dedication to helping patients enjoy more attractive smiles, readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* voted him this year's central Arkansas' Best Cosmetic Dentist.

"Being voted Best Cosmetic Dentist is certainly an honor, but Smile Arkansas is not a one-man show," Wyant said. "This award is not about me, but more about my staff of amazing individuals, often overlooked by the public and media, who so richly deserve recognition."

Ruth Quick, the clinic's practice coordinator who has years of experience, is the friendly voice on the phone and the smiling face at the office who makes sure the appointment schedule runs smoothly.

"Our registered dental hygienists, Kelley Rasco and Whitney Robinson, provide that soft touch and help educate our patients about the benefits of good dental health and living a healthy lifestyle," Wyant said. "Jasmine Miller, our very talented certified dental assistant, also has years of experience. She works closely with me to provide stunning smile makeovers for our patients."

In addition to state-of-the-art dental care, patients at Smile Arkansas enjoy a bit of pampering with massage pads, warming blankets and even baked goodies and gourmet beverages.

"We want our patients to be more than comfortable," Wyant said. "We want you to enjoy a pleasant, even rejuvenating, experience."



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- Chenal Pkwy.
- McCain Mall
- Conway



2015 BEST GREEK 5 YEARS AND COUNTING...





ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

Hangers Cleaners has been providing dry-cleaning and laundry service in central Arkansas since 2006.



BEST DRY CLEANER
Hangers Cleaners >>

Local dry cleaner irons out another victory

With seven locations in central Arkansas, Hangers Cleaners has been selected as Best Dry Cleaner by readers of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in its Best of the Best readers' poll for the second consecutive year.

"Being selected by the readers is a great recognition of our staff's dedication to great customer service," said Scott Hailey, general manager. "We want to clean your clothes as if they were ours."

The family-owned and -operated business has a combined staff experience of more than 500 years. The company was started in 2006, providing a premium dry cleaning and laundry choice in central Arkansas with a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly plant, multiple locations, and free home and office pickup and delivery.

For added convenience, the Hangers Cleaners mobile phone app for iPhone and Android users makes scheduling a pickup at home or the office as simple as a few taps.

"We're proud that the Hangers cleaning process leaves no chemical smell, which makes your clothes

smell better, feel better and last longer," Hailey said. "You can trust that your cleaning is done in a way that is safe for you, your clothes and the environment. We clean with biodegradable, organic cleaning agents instead of harsh chemicals. In everything we do, it's our goal to reduce our environmental footprint. In addition, we recycle garment hangers and plastic clothing wrap."

Each year, Hangers Cleaners partners with KATV Channel 7 in the Coats for Kids coat drive that benefits The Watershed Project. During the Christmas season, Hangers asks local families to donate new, slightly used or outgrown coats by dropping them off at any Hangers location or by giving them to their delivery-route driver. Hangers then cleans, repairs and helps distribute the coats to kids, as well as adults, in need.

"Being a local family-owned business gives us the opportunity to serve our neighbors and be involved in our community," Hailey said. "Last year, with the help of fellow central Arkansans, we collected, cleaned and distributed over 8,000 coats!"

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Chenal Elementary School in Little Rock provides a nurturing environment for students to learn and prepare for the next level of their education.



BEST PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Chenal Elementary School >>

Teachers, parents collaborate for student success

A Little Rock elementary school has made a distinct impression with parents and the community. Chenal Elementary School has come out on top this year in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette's* Best of the Best readers' poll as Best Public Elementary School.

"I'm excited; I'm proud. I'm glad that we're continuing to get the support and that everyone is recognized for our hard work and the efforts we've put into maintaining our test scores and academics and the culture of the community," Principal Felecia Hamilton said.

Hamilton said her faculty and teachers work to create a nurturing environment for Chenal Elementary's students. She said teachers are one of the more important aspects of the school's success.

"If I could rank [my teachers], they're No. 1," she said. "They carry out the plans, as far as the academic plans. They help the parents feel secure when they drop their kids off, that they're in the best hands as far as their learning."

Hamilton said the communication between teachers and parents is essential to providing the best education for students.

Last year, Chenal Elementary was a finalist for Best Public Elementary School

in the Best of the Best readers' poll. Hamilton said she is proud of the progress the school has made and the fact that it came out on top this year.

"We're happy about that," she said. "There are a lot of great schools out there; we're just happy that we get recognized like that."

To continue improving the students' education, Hamilton said her staff constantly monitors the students' progress and works to improve weak areas. The teachers also make efforts to include enrichment activities in the curriculum.

"Unlike a lot of elementary schools, we try to incorporate some enrichment activities," she said. "When kids are transitioning to middle school, we try to offer clubs in our upper grades like drama club, and, this year, [we added] future volleyball [club]."

Chenal Elementary, which feeds students into Joe T. Robinson High School, partners with the high school. The high school holds spirit rallies at Chenal Elementary, and students wear shirts with Robinson High School's mascot, the Senators. The principal said this cooperation not only builds spirit in the west Little Rock community, but prepares the students for the next level.

— And the 2015 Best of the Best winners are ...

E

ach year, readers of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette nominate their favorite businesses and companies in central Arkansas by filling out the Best of the Best ballot published in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and posted to **Arkansasonline.com**. The top five nominees in each category were published in a special section in August. Readers were asked to vote for their favorite finalists. Winners from the online tabulations are divided into six major categories: Eating and Drinking, Entertainment, Health and Beauty, Kids and Family, Places, and Shopping and Services. Each year, the newspaper gets an enormous response. Here are the 2015 winners. Congratulations to all!



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Kids & Family
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Places
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Shopping & Services
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Kristin Stewart, center, retail advertising sales manager for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, presents a \$500 check to Ballot contest winner Mary Beth Cox, left, of Atkins, and a \$250 check to Top 5 contest winner Brigitte Houston, right, of Little Rock.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to two Best of the Best contest participants. Mary Beth Cox of Atkins won \$500 in the Ballot Nomination drawing, and Brigitte Houston of Little Rock won \$250 in the Top 5 section drawing. Winners were drawn at random.

For a chance to win next year, look for the 2016 Best of the Best ballot nomination contest, beginning in June.

Arkansas Democrat  Gazette



ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE FILE PHOTO



FINALIST: BEST PIZZA

Shotgun Dan's Pizza

Whether diners have a hankering for pizza, chicken wings, sandwiches or salsa, Shotgun Dan's Pizza has just the thing to satisfy a hearty appetite. The restaurant has three locations, in Little Rock, North Little Rock and Sherwood.

EATING & DRINKING >>

BEST ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BUFFET

● **Larry's Pizza**

FINALISTS: Brown's Country Restaurant
Golden Corral

BEST ASIAN RESTAURANT

● **Pei Wei Asian Diner**

FINALISTS: Fantastic China Chinese Cuisine
Fu Lin Chinese Restaurant

BEST BAKERY

● **Community Bakery**

FINALISTS: Boulevard Bread Co.
Mickey's Cakes & Sweets

BEST BAR/HAPPY HOUR

● **Bar Louie**

FINALISTS: Capital Bar & Grill
Local Lime

BEST BARBECUE

● **Whole Hog Café**

FINALISTS: Corky's Ribs & BBQ
Sims Bar-B-Que

BEST BARBECUE RIBS

● **Whole Hog Café**

FINALISTS: Corky's Ribs & BBQ
Sims Bar-B-Que

BEST BREAKFAST

● **Cracker Barrel**

FINALISTS: IHOP
The Root Café



SUBMITTED PHOTO



FINALIST: BEST MARGARITA
Cantina Laredo

Touting fine Mexican food with a modern twist, Cantina Laredo is also a happy-hour hot spot, offering a signature margarita that pairs well with the Midtown Little Rock restaurant's south-of-the border fare.

BEST BREWERY

● **Diamond Bear Brewing Co.**

FINALISTS: Bj's Restaurant & Brewhouse
Lost 40 Brewery

BEST BRUNCH

● **Mimi's Café**

FINALISTS: Red Door
YaYa's Euro Bistro

BEST BURGER

● **David's Burgers**

FINALISTS: Big Orange
Five Guys Burgers and Fries

BEST BUSINESS LUNCH

● **Capital Bar & Grill**

FINALISTS: Brave New Restaurant
McAlisters' Deli

BEST CATERER

● **Catering To You**

FINALISTS: Trio's
Two Sisters Catering

— continued on page 32H

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BEST CATFISH

● **Flying Fish**

FINALISTS: Catfish City & BBQ Grill
Eat My Catfish

BEST CHEESE DIP

● **Mexico Chiquito**

FINALISTS: Señor Tequila
Local Lime

BEST CHICKEN WINGS

● **Buffalo Wild Wings**

FINALISTS: Slim Chickens
Wingstop

BEST COCKTAIL

● **Local Lime**

FINALISTS: Bar Louie
Capital Bar & Grill

BEST COFFEE HOUSE

● **Starbucks Coffee Co.**

FINALISTS: Boulevard Bread Co.
Mugs Café



SUBMITTED PHOTO



FINALIST: BEST BREAKFAST

IHOP

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BEST ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BUFFET
Larry's Pizza

Owned, operated and franchised by Larry White, right, Larry's Pizza of Arkansas has 11 locations with a mouth-watering selection of specialty pizzas, desserts, salads and sandwiches. Larry's son, Greg White, left, is manager of the Bryant location, where the all-you-can-eat buffet and game room are hits with diners.

BEST DELI

- **Jason's Deli**

FINALISTS: Hillcrest Artisan Meats
 McAllister's Deli

BEST DESSERTS

- **Community Bakery**

FINALISTS: Copeland's
 Gigi's Cupcakes

BEST DOUGHNUTS

- **Shipley Do-Nuts**

FINALISTS: Dale's Donut Shop
 Krispy Kreme Doughnuts

BEST FAST FOOD

- **Chick-fil-A**

FINALISTS: Sonic
 Zaxby's

BEST FINE DINING

- **Brave New Restaurant**

FINALISTS: Arthur's Prime Steakhouse
 Sonny Williams' Steak Room

BEST FRENCH FRIES

- **David's Burgers**

FINALISTS: Big Orange
 McDonald's

BEST FRIED CHICKEN

- **Gus's World Famous Fried Chicken**

FINALISTS: Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen
 Slim Chickens

BEST FROZEN TREATS

- **Shake's Frozen Custard**

FINALISTS: Baskin-Robbins
 Le Pops



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Chenal Elementary School



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FINALIST: BEST ROMANTIC RESTAURANT
FINALIST: BEST STEAKHOUSE

Sonny Williams' Steak Room

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FINALISTS: Layla's Gyros & Pizzeria
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BEST HIBACHI GRILL
● **Benihana**
FINALISTS: Sakura Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi
Shogun Japanese Steakhouse
and Sushi Bar

BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANT
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Little Rock, AR

BEST MARGARITA

● **Local Lime**

FINALISTS: Cantina Laredo
Señor Tequila

BEST MEXICAN RESTAURANT

● **Local Lime**

FINALISTS: Chuy's
Señor Tequila

BEST PATIO DINING

● **U.S. Pizza Co.**

FINALISTS: Brave New Restaurant
YaYa's Euro Bistro

BEST PIZZA

● **U.S. Pizza Co.**

FINALISTS: Damgoode Pies
Shotgun Dan's Pizza

BEST ROMANTIC RESTAURANT

● **Brave New Restaurant**

FINALISTS: Sonny Williams' Steak Room
1620 Savoy

BEST SALADS

● **U.S. Pizza Co.**

FINALISTS: Olive Garden Italian Restaurant
ZaZa Fine Salad + Wood Oven
Pizza Co.

BEST SALSA

● **Local Lime**

FINALISTS: Chuy's
Señor Tequila

BEST SANDWICH

● **Jimmy's Serious Sandwiches**

FINALISTS: Boulevard Bread Co.
Panera Bread

BEST SEAFOOD

● **Bonefish Grill**

FINALISTS: Cajun's Wharf
Flying Fish

BEST SERVICE

● **Chick-fil-A**

FINALISTS: Arthur's Prime Steakhouse
Brave New Restaurant

BEST SPORTS BAR

● **Buffalo Wild Wings**

FINALISTS: Bar Louie
The Tavern Sports Grill

BEST STEAKHOUSE

● **Arthur's Prime Steakhouse**

FINALISTS: The Butcher Shop
Steakhouse
Sonny Williams' Steak Room

BEST SUSHI

● **Sushi Café**

FINALISTS: Ocean's at Arthur's
Sakura Japanese Steakhouse
& Sushi

ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION >>

BEST ART GALLERY

● **Arkansas Arts Center**

FINALISTS: Cantrell Gallery
Gallery 26

BEST FESTIVAL

● **Riverfest**

FINALISTS: Greek Food Festival
Hillcrest HarvestFest

— continued on page 36H

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- * Best Fine Dining
- * Best Romantic Restaurant



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BEST GAMBLING CENTER
 OR CASINO

- **Oaklawn Racing & Gaming**

FINALISTS: Gold Strike Resort & Casino
 Horseshoe Casino Tunica

BEST GOLF COURSE

- **Chenal Country Club**

FINALISTS: Country Club of Little Rock
 Pleasant Valley Country Club

BEST LIVE THEATER

- **Arkansas Repertory Theatre**

FINALISTS: Murry's Dinner Playhouse
 The Robinson Center

BEST LOCAL DJ

- **Bob Robbins, 105.1 The Wolf**

FINALISTS: Heather Brown, Alice 107.7
 Pool Boy, Alice 107.7

BEST LOCAL
 RADIO STATION

- **Alice 107.7**

FINALISTS: 103.7 The Buzz
 105.1 The Wolf
 B 98.5

BEST LOCAL TV
 NEWS ANCHOR

- **Craig O'Neil, THV 11**

FINALISTS: Alyson Courtney, KATV Channel 7
 Scott Inman, KATV Channel 7

BEST LOCAL TV
 MORNING SHOW

- **Daybreak, KATV Channel 7**

FINALISTS: Good Morning Arkansas,
 KATV Channel 7
 THV This Morning, THV 11

BEST LOCAL TV
 SPORTS REPORTER

- **Steve Sullivan, KATV Channel 7**

FINALISTS: Craig O'Neil, THV 11
 Wess Moore, Fox 16

BEST LOCAL TV
 WEATHER REPORTER

- **Ed Buckner, THV 11**

FINALISTS: Melinda Mayo, KATV Channel 7
 Todd Yakoubian, KATV Channel 7

BEST MUSEUM

- **Museum of Discovery**

FINALISTS: Arkansas Arts Center
 William J. Clinton
 Presidential Center

BEST PARK

- **Pinnacle Mountain State Park**

FINALISTS: Burns Park
 Two Rivers Park

BEST PLACE TO BIKE

- **Big Dam Bridge**

FINALISTS: Arkansas River Trail
 Two Rivers Park

BEST PLACE TO CAMP

- **Lake Ouachita**

FINALISTS: Buffalo National Park
 Petit Jean State Park

BEST PLACE TO HEAR
 LIVE MUSIC

- **Cajun's Wharf**

FINALISTS: Juanita's
 The Rev Room

BEST WEEKEND GETAWAY

- **Hot Springs**

FINALISTS: Branson
 Eureka Springs



HEALTH & BEAUTY >>

BEST AUDIOLOGIST

● **UAMS Audiology Clinic**
FINALISTS: Patti Martin, Ph.D.
Saline Audiology

BEST BARBER SHOP

● **Jerry's Barber Shop**
FINALISTS: Great Clips
Sport Clips

BEST CARDIOLOGIST

● **Andrew G. Kumpuris, M.D.**
FINALISTS: Scott L. Beau, M.D.
Scott A. Davis, M.D.

BEST CHIROPRACTOR

● **Sarah Hayes, D.C.**
FINALISTS: Darren Beavers, D.C.
Blake W. Bennett, D.C.
Richard L. Riley, D.C.

BEST COSMETIC DENTIST

● **C. Lee Wyant, D.D.S.**
FINALISTS: DJ Dailey, D.D.S.
Jeff Garner, D.D.S.

BEST COSMETIC STORE

● **Sephora**
FINALISTS: Dillard's
Ulta

BEST COSMETIC SURGEON

● **Rhys Branman, M.D.**
FINALISTS: Suzanne Yee, M.D.
Gene Sloane, M.D.

BEST DAY SPA

● **Rejuvenation Clinic Day Spa**
FINALISTS: Ava Bella Day Spa
Indulgences by Body Bronze

BEST DENTIST

● **Jordan Cooper, D.D.S.**
FINALISTS: Tad L. Beene, D.D.S.
DJ Dailey, D.D.S.

BEST DERMATOLOGIST

● **René Bressinck, M.D.**
FINALISTS: Gregory Dwyer, M.D.
Gunnar H. Gibson, M.D.

BEST DRUG STORE /PHARMACY

● **Walgreens Pharmacy**
FINALISTS: Cornerstone Pharmacy
Kroger Pharmacy

BEST EYE LASH EXTENSIONS

● **Indulgences by Body Bronze**
FINALISTS: Beauty Geek
Embellish Salon & Lash Bar



SUBMITTED PHOTO



BEST DENTIST

● **Jordan Cooper, D.D.S.**

A second-generation dentist, Dr. Jordan Cooper, far right, joined his father, far left, in practice in 2006 at Cooper Family Dentistry, which now has seven locations throughout central Arkansas. The dentists and staff at Cooper Family Dentistry are proud of the clinics' state-of-the-art facilities and strive to provide patients with high-quality care using the most modern techniques and current treatment options available.

BEST FITNESS CLASS

● **10 Fitness**
FINALISTS: Little Rock Athletic Club
Pure Barre

BEST HAIR SALON

● **Caracalla The Body Spa**
FINALISTS: Fringe Benefits
Joel's

— continued on page 38H

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FINALIST: BEST DENTIST
 FINALIST: BEST COSMETIC DENTIST
DJ Dailey, D.D.S.

An experienced general and cosmetic dentist in Little Rock, Dr. DJ Dailey's mission is provide up-to-date dental artistry in a comfortable and caring environment that puts patients at ease.



SUBMITTED PHOTO



BEST WEIGHT-LOSS CENTER
 FINALIST: BEST HOSPITAL
 FINALIST: BEST COMPANY TO WORK FOR (>250)
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

A standout as a great place to work or to receive treatment as a patient, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is the largest public employer and the only academic health center in the state. There are 64 degree programs and certificates available through UAMS's Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions, Public Health and graduate school.

BEST HEALTH & FITNESS CLUB

● **10 Fitness**

FINALISTS: LA Fitness
 Little Rock Athletic Club

BEST HEARING CENTER

● **UAMS Audiology Clinic**

FINALISTS: Arkansas Otolaryngology Center
 Little Rock Audiology

BEST HOSPITAL

● **Arkansas Children's Hospital**

FINALISTS: Baptist Health Medical Center
 University of Arkansas
 for Medical Sciences

BEST HYPNOTHERAPIST

● **Penny Rea Hypnosis Clinic**

FINALISTS: Martha Marshall, Ph.D.
 Today's Hypnosis

Optometric Opportunities



Wants To Say "Thank You" to Central Arkansas for **Once Again** Voting
Dr. Bryan G. Armstrong
"Best of the Best" Optometrists.

Dr. Armstrong, in turn, could not thank his staff enough for the support they provide him and for the caring, professional, personal service they provide to the people in Central Arkansas that choose to come to any of our Central Arkansas Clinics as patients. Dr. Armstrong and his staff members offer only the highest quality optical frames, spectacle lenses and contact lenses. Additionally, Dr. Armstrong offers the latest in high tech, medical instrumentation for the diagnosis and management of ocular diseases. Again, "Thank You" for voting Dr. Bryan G. Armstrong "Best of the Best" optometrists of Central Arkansas.

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BEST MANICURE/PEDICURE

● **Rejuvenation Clinic Day Spa**

FINALISTS: Deluxe Nails
Fancy Nails

BEST PLACE TO GET A MASSAGE

● **Rejuvenation Clinic Day Spa**

FINALISTS: Ava Bella Day Spa
Massage Envy Spa

BEST MEDICAL GENERAL PRACTITIONER

● **Kent Covert, M.D.**

FINALISTS: Daniel Felton, M.D.
Stephen Tucker, M.D.

BEST NEUROLOGIST

● **Brad Thomas, M.D.**

FINALISTS: Robert L. Archer, M.D.
J. Brett Ironside, M.D.

— continued on page 40H



ANGIE DAVIS/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER



FINALIST: BEST ORTHODONTIST

John Daniel, D.D.S., M.S.D

Dr. John Daniel and the staff at Daniel Orthodontics enjoy having a positive influence in the lives of their patients, helping boost patients' self-esteem and confidence with healthy, beautiful smiles. Daniel Orthodontics has three convenient locations in Little Rock, Bryant and Benton.

Dr. Bryan G. Armstrong & the Benton, Bryant and Sheridan Eyecare Staff Members

Would like to Thank the Central Arkansas Public For Once Again Voting



Dr. Armstrong "Best of the Best" Optometrists.

Dr. Armstrong, in turn, could not thank his staff enough for the support they provide him and for the caring, professional, personal service they provide to the people in Central Arkansas.

Dr. Armstrong and his staff members offer only the highest quality optical frames, spectacle lenses and contact lenses and the latest in high tech, medical instrumentation for the diagnosis and management of ocular diseases.

Again, "Thank You" for Voting Dr. Bryan G. Armstrong "Best of the Best" Optometrists for Central Arkansas.



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UALR Chancellor Joel Anderson, STEM Festival at UALR campus.

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BEST WOMEN'S CLINIC
The Woman's Clinic, P.A.

Throughout its history dating back to the 1930s, The Woman's Clinic, P.A. has been dedicated to providing up-to-date and personalized obstetrical and gynecological care for the women of central Arkansas, putting the clinic at the top among other OB-GYN groups for the fourth consecutive year in the Best of the Best readers' poll.

BEST OPHTHALMOLOGIST

● **Katherine Baltz, M.D.**

FINALISTS: Wade Brock, M.D.
 Cliff Clifton, M.D.

BEST OPTOMETRIST

● **Bryan Armstrong, O.D.**

FINALISTS: Jason L. Bright, O.D.
 Dan Hennessey, O.D.

BEST ORTHODONTIST

● **David Wardlaw, D.D.S., M.S.**

FINALISTS: John Daniel, D.D.S., M.S.D.
 Jim Phelan, D.D.S., M.S.D.

BEST ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON

● **W. Scott Bowen, M.D.**

FINALISTS: C. Lowry Barnes, M.D.
 David Rhodes, M.D.

BEST PHYSICAL THERAPY CENTER

● **OrthoArkansas**

FINALISTS: Advanced Physical Therapy
 Baptist Health Therapy Center

BEST TANNING SALON

● **Glo Tan**

FINALISTS: Advanced SunSystems
 Oasis Tanning

BEST UROLOGIST

● **D. Keith Mooney, M.D.**

FINALISTS: John Paul Brizzolara, M.D.
 Timothy D. Langford, M.D.

BEST WEIGHT-LOSS CENTER

● **University of Arkansas
 for Medical Sciences**

FINALISTS: Diet Center
 Weight Watchers

BEST WOMEN'S CLINIC

● **The Woman's Clinic, P.A.**

FINALISTS: Arkansas Women's Center
 Cornerstone Clinic for Women

BEST YOGA STUDIO

● **Barefoot Studio**

FINALISTS: The Floating Lotus
 Little Rock Athletic Club



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CODY GRAVES/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE



JENNIFER ELLIS/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE



FINALIST: BEST PEDIATRIC DENTIST

James L. Bevans, D.D.S.

Established by James L. Bevans, D.D.S. in 1968, the staff of Bevans Pediatric takes pride in providing individualized oral care to infants, children, teens and young adults. The clinic's hippo mascot, Bippo, and safari theme are examples of how Bevans Pediatric keeps patients smiling.



BEST CHARTER SCHOOL

eSTEM Public Charter School

Ensuring that students not only graduate but are also college-ready, career-ready and world-ready is the goal of the educational staff of Little Rock's eStem Public Charter Schools, which offer tuition-free education at the elementary, middle and high school levels. As publicly funded schools, any school-age child in the state is eligible to attend these open-enrollment schools.

KIDS & FAMILY >>

BEST CHILD CARE CENTER

● **St. James Learning Center**

FINALISTS: FUMC Child Development Center
The Children's Center

BEST DANCE STUDIO

● **Ms. Karen's Dance Studio**

FINALISTS: Rock City Dance Center
Shuffles & Ballet II

BEST FAMILY OUTING

● **Little Rock Zoo**

FINALISTS: Pinnacle Mountain State Park
Arkansas Travelers

BEST GYMNASTICS OR CHEER

● **River City Gymnastics**

FINALISTS: Cheer City United (CCU)
Leah's Gymnastics & Cheerleading

— continued on page 42H

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● **The Purple Cow**
 FINALISTS: All Aboard Restaurant and Grill
 Chuck E. Cheese's

BEST KIDS' BIRTHDAY PARTY PLACE

● **Altitude Trampoline Park**
 FINALISTS: Museum of Discovery
 Chuck E. Cheese's

BEST KIDS' INDOOR PLAY PLACE

● **Altitude Trampoline Park**
 FINALISTS: Playtime Pizza
 Jump!Zone

BEST PEDIATRIC DENTIST

● **Gerald W. Friend, D.D.S.**
 FINALISTS: James L. Bevans, D.D.S.
 Jana Barfield, D.M.D.



JENNIFER ELLIS/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE



BEST PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 FINALIST: BEST PRIVATE MIDDLE SCHOOL

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BEST PEDIATRICIAN

● **Chad Rodgers, M.D.**

FINALISTS: Ashley Davis, M.D.
David M. Weed, M.D.

BEST SUMMER CAMP

● **Camp Aldersgate**

FINALISTS: Ferncliff Camp and
Conference Center
Lake Nixon Summer Day Camp

BEST CHARTER SCHOOL

● **eStem Public Charter School**

FINALISTS: LISA Academy
Academics Plus Charter School

**BEST PUBLIC
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

● **Chenal Elementary School**

FINALISTS: Forest Park Elementary School
Don Roberts Elementary School

**BEST PRIVATE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

● **Our Lady of the Holy Souls
Catholic School**

FINALISTS: Pulaski Academy
Little Rock Christian Academy

BEST PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

● **Pulaski Heights
Middle School**

FINALISTS: Bryant Middle School
Forest Heights STEM Academy

BEST PRIVATE MIDDLE SCHOOL

● **Pulaski Academy**

FINALISTS: Our Lady of the Holy Souls
Catholic School
Little Rock Christian Academy

BEST PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

● **Little Rock Central High School**

FINALISTS: Cabot High School
Bryant High School

BEST PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL

● **Catholic High School
for Boys**

FINALISTS: Pulaski Academy
Little Rock Christian Academy

PLACES >>

BEST ASSISTED-LIVING COMPLEX

● **Fox Ridge**
FINALISTS: Brookdale
Parkway Village

BEST COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

● **University of
Central Arkansas**
FINALISTS: Arkansas State University-Beebe
University of Arkansas
at Little Rock

BEST COMMUNITY

● **Chenal Valley**
FINALISTS: The Heights
Hillcrest

BEST COMPANY TO WORK FOR <250

● **Cosmetic
Surgery Center**
FINALISTS: The Janet Jones Co.
Middleton Heat & Air

BEST COMPANY TO WORK FOR >250

● **Arkansas Children's Hospital**
FINALISTS: Stephens Inc.
University of Arkansas
for Medical Sciences

BEST EVENT VENUE

● **Verizon Arena**
FINALISTS: Benton Event Center
Clinton Presidential Center

BEST HOTEL

● **Capital Hotel**
FINALISTS: Embassy Suites Little Rock
Little Rock Marriott

BEST LIBRARY

● **Central Arkansas Library
System – Main Library**
FINALISTS: Saline County Library System
William J. Clinton Presidential
Library

BEST RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

● **Hot Springs Village**
FINALISTS: Fox Ridge
Parkway Village



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TRI-LAKES EDITION FILE PHOTO



FINALIST: BEST EVENT VENUE
Benton Event Center

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SUBMITTED PHOTO



FINALIST: BEST COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

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FINALIST: BEST BANK
FINALIST: BEST MORTGAGE COMPANY

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SHOPPING & SERVICES >>

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- **Thomas and Thomas, LLP**

FINALISTS: BKD Little Rock, LLP
Hudson Cisne & Co., LLP

BEST ANTIQUE STORE

- **Mid-Towne Antique Mall**

FINALISTS: Blue Suede Shoes Antique Mall
Fabulous Finds Antiques & Decorative Mall

BEST ATTORNEY

- **Judson C. Kidd**

FINALISTS: Charles "Skip" Davidson
Gary Green

BEST ATV DEALER

- **Bass Pro Shops - Bradford Marine**

FINALISTS: Bradford Marine & ATV
Richards Honda Yamaha

BEST AUCTIONEER

- **Tom Blackmon (with Blackmon Auctions)**

FINALISTS: Bill Hartenedy (with Blackmon Auctions)
Brad H. Wooley

BEST AUTO DEALER (NEW)

- **Everett Buick GMC**

FINALISTS: Crain Automotive Team
Landers Auto Sales, Benton

— continued on page 46H

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Arkansas Democrat Gazette

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BEST AUTO DEALER (USED)

● **Everett Buick GMC**
FINALISTS: Bale Chevrolet
Landers Auto Sales, Benton

BEST AUTO REPAIR

● **Christian Brothers Automotive**
FINALISTS: Donnie's Foreign Car Service
Landers Auto Sales, Benton

BEST BANK

● **Arvest Bank**
FINALISTS: Bank of the Ozarks
Simmons Bank

BEST BOAT DEALER

● **Bradford Marine & ATV**
FINALISTS: Arkansas Marine Inc.
Bass Pro Shops - Bradford Marine

BEST BOOKSTORE

● **Barnes & Noble**
FINALISTS: LifeWay Christian Store
WordsWorth Books & Co.

BEST BRIDAL/FORMAL WEAR

● **David's Bridal**
FINALISTS: The Bridal Cottage
Proposals

BEST CAMERA/VIDEO

● **Bedford Camera & Video**
FINALISTS: Best Buy
Hastings



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FINALIST: BEST AUTO DEALER (USED)

Bale Chevrolet

Located on Chenal Parkway in west Little Rock, the Bale family and staff at Bale Chevrolet make it their goal to ensure customers are completely satisfied, whether they are shopping the dealership's inventory of new or pre-owned vehicles. Bale Chevrolet also offers a convenient one-stop shop for vehicle maintenance needs with its service and parts departments.

BEST CAR WASH

● **Splash Carwash**
FINALISTS: Boomerang Carwash
Razorback Quik Lube

BEST CONSIGNMENT/RESALE STORE

● **Goodwill**
FINALISTS: Plato's Closet
Caroline's Children's Consignment Boutique



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BEST CREDIT UNION

● **Arkansas Federal Credit Union**

FINALISTS: Baptist Health Federal Credit Union
Telcoe Federal Credit Union

BEST DRY CLEANER

● **Hangers Cleaners**

FINALISTS: Moose Cleaners
Schickel's Cleaners

BEST ELECTRICIAN

● **Staley Inc.**

FINALISTS: Beard Electric
Gary Houston Electric Company Inc.

BEST EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

● **Staffmark**

FINALISTS: The Employment Experts
The Hughes Agency

BEST ESTATE SALE COMPANY

● **Anna's Estate Sales**

FINALISTS: Pennsylvania Trading Co.
Roy Dudley Estate Sales

— continued on page 48H



JENNIFER ELLIS/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE



BEST FLORIST

Tipton & Hurst

Tipton & Hurst, family-owned and -operated since 1886, is a full-service florist with five locations in central Arkansas. The staff helps customers with everything from fresh flowers and plants to home accessories and gift items, as well as wedding and event decor.



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BEST FINANCIAL PLANNER

● **Edward Jones**
 FINALISTS: Stephens Inc.
 Beth Hathaway

BEST FLEA MARKET

● **Blue Suede Shoes
 Antique Mall**
 FINALISTS: Hidden Treasures Flea Market
 Mid-Towne Antique Mall

BEST FLOOR-COVERING STORE

● **Lowe's Home
 Improvement**
 FINALISTS: Akel's Carpet One Floor
 & Home
 Carpet Barn

BEST FLORIST

● **Tipton & Hurst**
 FINALISTS: About Vase
 Frances Flower Shop

BEST FRAMING SHOP

● **Hobby Lobby**
 FINALISTS: BA Framers
 Michael's

BEST FUNERAL HOME

● **Roller Funeral Homes**
 FINALISTS: Ruebel Funeral Home
 Smith Funeral Homes

BEST FURNITURE STORE

● **Ashley Furniture
 HomeStore**
 FINALISTS: Cleo's Furniture
 Hank's Fine Furniture

BEST GOLF STORE

● **Academy Sports
 & Outdoors**
 FINALISTS: Edwin Watts Golf
 Dick's Sporting Goods



ARKANSAS LIFE FILE PHOTO



BEST JEWELRY STORE
Sissy's Log Cabin

With four locations, in Pine Bluff, Little Rock, Jonesboro and Memphis, Tennessee, Sissy's Log Cabin has been family-owned and -operated since 1970. Bill Jones, right, son of founder and CEO Sissy Jones, serves as president of the jewelry company, and his wife, Sharrri, left, is the company's executive secretary and a member of Sissy's Board of Directors.

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BEST WINE SELECTION
BEST LIQUOR STORE
Colonial Wine & Spirits

Clark Trim is president of Colonial Wines & Spirits in west Little Rock, which offers one of the area's largest selections of wines, beers and spirits. The store's friendly and knowledgeable staff is available to help customers choose just the right beverages to celebrate special occasions and assist with party planning. Customers can enjoy samples at Colonial's tasting bar or find something special in the climate-controlled reserve room.

BEST GROCERY STORE

● **Kroger**

FINALISTS: The Fresh Market
 Harps

BEST HEALTH FOOD STORE

● **Whole Foods Market**

FINALISTS: The Fresh Market
 Drug Emporium

BEST GUN SHOP

● **Fort Thompson**
Sporting Goods

FINALISTS: Bass Pro Shops
 Don's Weaponry

BEST HEATING & AIR COMPANY

● **Middleton Heat & Air**

FINALISTS: Bob & Ed's Heating & Air Conditioning
 Dash Heating & Cooling

— continued on page 50H

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ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE FILE PHOTO



BEST PAINT STORE
Sherwin-Williams

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**BEST HOME
IMPROVEMENT STORE**

● **Lowe's Home
Improvement**

FINALISTS: Fuller & Son Hardware & Lumber
The Home Depot

**BEST HUNTING/FISHING
SUPPLY STORE**

● **Bass Pro Shops**

FINALISTS: Academy Sports & Outdoors
Fort Thompson Sporting Goods

BEST INSURANCE COMPANY

● **State Farm**

FINALISTS: Allstate
Farm Bureau Insurance

BEST JEWELRY STORE

● **Sissy's Log Cabin**

FINALISTS: Jones & Son
Stanley Jewelers

**BEST LADIES
CLOTHING STORE**

● **SteamRoller Blues**

FINALISTS: Cato
Dillard's

**BEST LANDSCAPE
COMPANY**

● **The Good Earth
Garden Center**

FINALISTS: Botanica Gardens
Horticare Landscape Companies

BEST LIMO SERVICE

- **Little Rock Limousine Ltd.**

FINALISTS: Above & Beyond Limousine
Central Limousine Inc.
Twin City Limousines
and Event Center

BEST LIQUOR STORE

- **Colonial Wines & Spirits**

FINALISTS: ACE Liquor Center
Enterprise Liquor

BEST LOCALLY GROWN FRESH PRODUCE

- **River Market Farmers Market**

FINALISTS: Holland Bottom Farm
Hillcrest Farmers Market

— continued on page 52H



JENNIFER ELLIS/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE



FINALIST: BEST LIQUOR STORE

Ace Liquor Center

Located between Jacksonville and Cabot on the Pulaski/Lonoke county line, owners of Ace Liquor Center Nick Pierce, left, Justin Pierce and Dana Pierce offer a large selection of beer, wine and spirits.

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BEST MATTRESS STORE

● **Denver Mattress Co.**

FINALISTS: Ashley Furniture HomeStore
Mattress King

BEST MEN'S CLOTHING STORE

● **Dillard's**

FINALISTS: Bauman's Fine Men's Clothing
Greenhaw's Fine Men's Wear

BEST MOBILE PHONE SERVICE

● **AT&T**

FINALISTS: Sprint
Verizon Wireless

BEST MORTGAGE COMPANY

● **Arvest Mortgage**

FINALISTS: Bank of Little Rock
Simmons Bank

— continued on page 54H



CODY GRAVES/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE



BEST REAL ESTATE AGENT; FINALIST: BEST REAL ESTATE COMPANY
FINALIST: BEST COMPANY TO WORK FOR <250

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L to R: Dustin Cooley, Farrah Ervin, Marlene Campbell, Charlotte Potts (Agent), Landon Potts, Stephanie Lynch, Jordan Toler, & Matt Carter



JENNIFER ELLIS/ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE




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FINALIST: BEST VETERINARY CLINIC
Shackleford Road Veterinary Clinic

The team of veterinarians, technicians and front-office staff at Shackleford Road Veterinary Clinic prides itself on offering individualized and compassionate care for each of its clients' pets. The clinic offers a complete range of services, including annual wellness exams, vaccinations, dental care, X-rays, laboratory testing, surgery, boarding and more.

BEST NURSERY/
GARDEN CENTER

- **Good Earth Garden Center**

FINALISTS: Cantrell Gardens Nursery
River Valley Horticultural Products Inc.

BEST OFFICE-SUPPLY STORE

- **Office Depot**

FINALISTS: Pettus Office Products
Staples

BEST OIL AND LUBE

- **Jiffy Lube**

FINALISTS: Austin Brothers Tire & Service
Razorback Carwash & Quik Lube

BEST PAINT STORE

- **Sherwin-Williams**

FINALISTS: The Home Depot
Lowe's Home Improvement

BEST PAWN SHOP

- **Braswell & Son**

FINALISTS: iPawn
Sue's Pawn Shop

BEST PEST CONTROL

- **Adams Pest Control**

FINALISTS: The Bug Man Inc.
Terminix

BEST PET BOARDING/
DAY CARE

- **Chenal Pet Palace**

FINALISTS: Briarwood Animal Hospital
Canine Country Club

BEST PET GROOMER

- **Petsmart**

FINALISTS: Gina's Pet Salon
K9 Splash & Dash
Petco

BEST PET STORE

● **Petsmart**
FINALISTS: Hollywood Feed
Petco

BEST PHOTOGRAPHER

● **Photography by Melisa**
FINALISTS: Whitney Bower
Jason Masters

BEST PLACE TO BUY A BICYCLE

● **Chainwheel**
FINALISTS: J & P Bike Shop
Spokes Little Rock

BEST PLACE TO BUY A MOTORCYCLE

● **Landers Harley-Davidson**
FINALISTS: Honda of North Little Rock
Richards Honda-Yamaha

BEST PLUMBER

● **Ray Lusk**
FINALISTS: Arrow Plumbing
Russell & LeMay

BEST POOLS AND SPAS

● **Townley Pool & Spa**
FINALISTS: Aloha Pools & Spa
Lindsey's Pools and Spa

BEST REAL ESTATE AGENT

● **Janet Jones**
FINALISTS: Laura Osborne
John Stivers

BEST REAL ESTATE COMPANY

● **Crye-Leike Realtors**
FINALISTS: The Janet Jones Company
Keller Williams Realty

BEST ROOFING COMPANY

● **Garcia and Son Roofing and Gutters**
FINALISTS: PI Roofing
Riley Hays Roofing & Construction

BEST RV STORE

● **Camping World**
FINALISTS: Mayflower RV
River City Recreation World

BEST SHOE STORE

● **Dillard's**
FINALISTS: DSW
Shoe Carnival

BEST SHOPPING CENTER

● **The Promenade at Chenal**
FINALISTS: Park Plaza Mall
McCain Mall

BEST SPORTING GOODS STORE

● **Academy Sports & Outdoors**
FINALISTS: Bass Pro Shops
Gene Lockwood's

BEST TOBACCO STORE

● **Tobacco Outlet**
FINALISTS: The Pipe & Tobacco Shop
Up In Smoke

BEST VAPOR STORE

● **A Vape Life**
FINALISTS: Razor Vapes
Vapor World

BEST VETERINARY CLINIC

● **Hillcrest Animal Hospital**
FINALISTS: Pinnacle Valley Animal Hospital
Shackleford Road Veterinary Clinic

BEST WINE SELECTION

● **Colonial Wines and Spirits**
FINALISTS: Springhill Wine & Spirits
O'Looney's Wine & Liquor



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