

VAN BUREN
chamber of commerce

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photo submitted

At the Chamber's February Business After Hours event, it was announced that Crawford County will be the first county in the western half of Arkansas to participate in the valuable workforce assessment program, Act Work Ready. Pictured from left to right are: Debbie Atwell, Superintendent, Mountainburg School District; Raymond Harvey, Owner, Turf & Pest Pro; Debbie Faubus-Kendrick, Executive Director, Crawford County Adult Education Center, Dennis Williamson, II, Economic Development Administrator, WAPDD; and Crawford County Judge Dennis Gilstrap.

Member Spotlight



photo submitted

Ronald Ragon Realty is helping families attain their dreams of home ownership with houses like the one pictured here.

Let's Talk Business

... from the desk of Terry Carson

What Are Act Work Ready Communities?

The Van Buren Chamber of Commerce's February Business After Hours came with an exciting announcement: The Western Arkansas Planning and Development District (WAPDD) shared that Crawford will be the first county in the western half of Arkansas to participate in the valuable workforce assessment program, Act Work Ready. The initiative's purpose is to promote the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) Program as a county-wide effort to prepare the workforce for current and future needs.

The Act WorkKeys NCRC is an example of a career readiness credential that ties people, business, and communities together by helping the local workforce to have the right skills for the right job. It is a county-wide collaboration of the cities, businesses, local school districts, workforce agencies, chambers of commerce and the Western Arkansas Planning and Development District.

According to ACT, participating counties, regions and states help:

- Business and industry know exactly what foundational skills they need for a productive workforce - and to easily communicate their needs.
- Individuals understand what skills are required by employers - and how to prepare themselves for success.
- Policy makers consistently measure the skills gap in a timely manner at the national, state, and local levels.
- Educators close the skills gap, via tools integrated into career pathways with stackable industry-recognized credentials.
- Economic developers use an on-demand reporting tool to market the quality of their workforce.

This is both a great achievement and exciting opportunity for our region. To learn more, please contact Dennis Williamson at dwilliamson@wapdd.org or Terry Carson at tcarson@vanburenchamber.org.

Chamber Members can personalize web listing

On the new Van Buren Chamber of Commerce website, members have the opportunity to highlight their business or organization on their individual listing.

Links to member pages were emailed out earlier this month with instructions

to create a log-in and edit individual member pages.

Any member who did not receive this email or who needs a link resent can contact the Chamber at 479-474-2761 or email Janie@VanBurenChamber.org.

Arkansas Scholars Awards Ceremony April 22

The Van Buren Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, in conjunction with the Van Buren School District, will honor the 2019 Arkansas Scholars with a special awards ceremony to be held on April 22.

The event recognizes more than 150 of Van Buren High School's most exceptional students. Arkansas Scholars is a prestigious distinction given only to graduates who have achieved a 95 percent or better attendance record in their four years of

high school.

The students must also have a "C" or higher average and have completed all the required courses to graduate in four years. Each scholar is presented with a certificate at the ceremony and awarded a medallion on graduation day. The reception and program will be held at the Van Buren Fine Arts Center at 7 p.m.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, call the Chamber at 479-474-2761.

Ronald Ragon Realty helping families achieve their dreams of home ownership

Home ownership is the dream of many families, and these days that dream is more attainable than ever in Western Arkansas. Identical twin brothers Ronald and Ragon Clements have been real estate brokers and homebuilders since 1990, and in 2010 Ronald Ragon Realty, Inc. started doing business in Van Buren and bringing its residents options for reasonably priced luxury homes.

"We take pride in being customer-oriented and offering the highest quality home for an affordable price," says Ragon Clements.

Currently, Ronald Ragon builds approximately 75 homes per year in the River Valley and Northwest Arkansas. Twenty-five to thirty of these homes are being built right here in Van Buren in the Legacy Valley Neighborhood on Northridge Drive East.

The homes range in price from \$150,000 to 250,000, and options include several popular "Craftsman-style" homes that are unique to the area. With a new elementary school being built right next to this subdivision and the newest phase featuring 25 lots with larger backyards in an open country setting, it is ideal for growing families!

In addition to these appealing features and its prime location, this is one of the few areas in Van

Buren still eligible for No Money Down Rural Development Loans. Those interested can visit and tour the neighborhood's model home, which is open to the public every day.

In the River Valley, Ronald Ragon Realty, Inc. has additions in Van Buren, Fort Smith, Barling, and Greenwood. In Northwest Arkansas, developments can be found in Prairie Grove and Pea Ridge. In both regions, Ronald Ragon prides themselves on providing customer service from the start of the process all the way to the finish line. They begin by finding their buyers the best financing opportunities in the market. By the end, buyers take the keys to a custom-built home with all the luxury features typically found in more expensive homes, but at a much more comfortable price tag.

Serving the customer in this way has been the key

to Ronald Ragon's success. It is also the driving force behind their choice to be a chamber member.

"It has always been our philosophy to support local business and the citizens of our communities," says Clements. "What better way to do that than through Chamber membership?"

Learn more about their home ownership options at RonaldRagonRealty.com or for more information, call 479-452-HOME.



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