



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



May 2017



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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Following are recent reports from Arkansas' tourism industry

Johnny Cash siblings to attend festival in his honor

The two youngest children in the Cash family clan will visit their childhood home during the Johnny Cash Heritage Festival on Oct. 19-21. The siblings will take part in a concert in a cotton field adjacent to the restored home at the former Dyess Colony in Mississippi County. Grammy-Award winners Rosanne Cash and Kris Kristofferson will perform along with country music singer Buddy Jewell. (May 10)

Filmmakers reflect on long-term effects of Japanese internment

"Relocation, Arkansas" was shown as part of the Bentonville Film Festival on May 5 at The Record in downtown Bentonville. A panel discussion followed, led by ABC7 News Los Angeles co-anchor David Ono and featuring two descendants of detainees, Maryland native Paul Takemoto and Arkansas native Richard Yada. (May 7)

XNA to build \$35 million parking deck to handle traffic growth

The rise in airline passengers at Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport has led to increased parking demand. Between 2011 and 2016, total passengers rose 19% to 1.33 million, from 1.12 million. (May 7)

Consumers spend \$887 billion each year on outdoor recreation

Each year, consumers spend more on outdoor recreation than on pharmaceuticals and fuel, combined, and almost as much as they did on hospital care, according to Bureau of Economic Analysis data. (May 3) **TBP**



Arkansas' tourism sector posts early 2017 dips compared to robust 2016 numbers

Tourism jobs and collections of the state's 2% tourism tax are down in the first two months of 2017, with hospitality tax collections among 17 cities posting a gain, according to the Arkansas Tourism Ticker.

However, the early 2017 numbers are up against big gains in 2016 that built upon similar growth in 2015.

Arkansas' tourism industry posted broad gains in employment and revenue during 2016, with the annual numbers up against tough comparisons with robust growth in 2015.

The 2016 Arkansas Tourism Ticker report showed a 4% gain in hospitality tax revenue among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the report, a 4.36% increase in collections of the state's 2% tourism tax, and a 1.58% increase in Arkansas tourism industry jobs compared to 2015.

Montine McNulty, executive director of the Arkansas Hospitality Association, said the industry continues to do well, but understands that "keeping up with the record pace of recent years will be tough." However, she is confident that with good weather, the numbers will improve in the summer vacation season.

The Arkansas Tourism Ticker is managed by Talk Business & Politics, and sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association. The ticker uses the following three measurements to review the health of the state's tourism industry.

- Hospitality tax collections – prepared food tax and lodging tax – of 17 Arkansas cities (cities listed below along with collections for each city);
- Tourism sector employment numbers as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and
- Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax. **TBP**

Results for the 2017 January-February ticker report



1.16% increase

Hospitality tax revenue in the two-month period among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker.



3.3% decrease

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in January-February 2017 compared with the same period in 2016.



0.77% decrease

Decrease in Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-February 2017 compared with the same period in 2016.

Hospitality tax revenue up in 12 of 17 cities surveyed, hotel tax 2.16%

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$6.767 million in January-February 2017, up 1.38% compared to the \$6.675 million in the same period of 2016.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$5.258 million in January-February 2017, up 1.16% compared to the \$5.197 million in the same period of 2016. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$1.509 million in January-February 2017, up 2.16% compared to the \$1.477 million in the same period of 2016.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, five posted hospitality tax collection declines to begin the year (El Dorado, down 22.7%; Eureka Springs, down 3.8%; Jonesboro, down 1.4%; North Little Rock, down 1.2%; and Springdale, down 10.6%). Of the 12 cities with gains, the range was a 15.1% gain in Van Buren and a 0.6% gain in Little Rock.

Only four cities posted hospitality tax collection declines in 2016 (El Dorado, down 7.39%; Pine Bluff, down 4.37%; Rogers, down 2.07%; and Russellville, down 1.76%). Of the 13 cities with gains, the range was a 12.11% gain in Springdale and a 2.66% gain in Conway.

Also, the state's tourism tax revenue totaled \$1.89 million in the first two months of 2017, down 3.3% compared to the same period in 2016. Arkansas' 2% tourism tax generated \$15.461 million in 2016, up 4.36% over the \$14.815 million in 2015. Collections of Arkansas' 2% tourism tax hit a monthly record of \$1.656 million in July 2015. **TBP**

Past seven years of 2% tax collections

2016: \$15.461 million	2012: \$12.404 million
2015: \$14.815 million	2011: \$12.025 million
2014: \$13.677 million	2010: \$11.492 million
2013: \$12.716 million	

Tourism tax collections by county



Following are the top 10 counties in terms of collecting 2% tourism tax in the January-February period, and the percentage increase/decrease from the same period in 2016.

Pulaski		\$478,629 up 6.03%
Benton		\$239,410 up 8.86%
Washington		\$172,016 down 18.07%
Garland		\$144,157 down 8.3%
Sebastian		\$83,633 down 0.64%
Craighead		\$73,582 up 26.46%
Carroll		\$50,929 down 14.18%
Faulkner		\$49,579 up 10.63%
Mississippi		\$46,540 down 9.37%
Jefferson		\$37,434 up 4.61%



Tourism sector jobs see slight decline to begin 2017

Monthly average Arkansas tourism sector jobs for the first two months of 2017 was 115,100, down 0.77% compared to the same period in 2016.

Travel and tourism sector employment began the year with 114,800 jobs in January, rising to 115,400 jobs in February. Sector employment hit a high of 116,700 in October 2016. The numbers are subject to revision by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Of the eight metro areas in or connected to Arkansas, the Bureau of Labor Statistics provides tourism employment data on five. Four of the five posted early 2017 employment gains compared with the same period in 2016, with Memphis-West Memphis area posting the largest percentage gain (5.55%). **TBP**

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

Jan.-Feb. 2017: **24,300**
(up 2.1% compared to same period in 2016)
Jan.-Feb. 2016: **23,800**
Jan.-Feb. 2010: **16,900**



Fort Smith

Jan.-Feb. 2017: **9,350** (up 2.7%)
Jan.-Feb. 2016: **9,100**
Jan.-Feb. 2010: **8,200**

Central Arkansas (Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

Jan.-Feb. 2017: **32,000** (down 3%)
Jan.-Feb. 2016: **33,000**
Jan.-Feb. 2010: **28,000**

Memphis-West Memphis (Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

Jan.-Feb. 2017: **66,600** (up 5.55%)
Jan.-Feb. 2016: **62,300**
Jan.-Feb. 2010: **62,650**

Texarkana (Arkansas-Texas)

Jan.-Feb. 2017: **6,700** (up 4.68%)
Jan.-Feb. 2016: **6,400**
Jan.-Feb. 2010: **5,450**



Tourism Tax Collections (by city)

CITY	Jan.-Feb. 2017	Jan.-Feb. 2016	% CHANGE
Bentonville	\$311,382	\$316,517	up 1.6%
Conway	\$629,075	\$614,342	up 2.4%
El Dorado	\$46,372	\$60,004	down 22.7%
Eureka Springs	\$122,906	\$127,824	down 3.8%
Fayetteville	\$503,524	\$481,815	up 4.5%
Fort Smith	\$130,096	\$125,845	up 3.4%
Harrison	\$91,816	\$90,669	up 1.3%
Hot Springs	\$856,968	\$806,008	up 6.3%
Jonesboro	\$93,993	\$95,311	down 1.4%
Little Rock	\$2.218 million	\$2.204 million	up 0.6%
North Little Rock	\$1.041 million	\$1.054 million	down 1.2%
Pine Bluff	\$238,750	\$234,296	up 1.9%
Rogers	\$99,920	\$96,378	up 3.7%
Russellville	\$54,786	\$48,974	up 11.9%
Springdale	\$54,729	\$61,246	down 10.6%
Texarkana	\$182,547	\$178,769	up 2.1%
Van Buren	\$90,488	\$78,590	up 15.1%





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