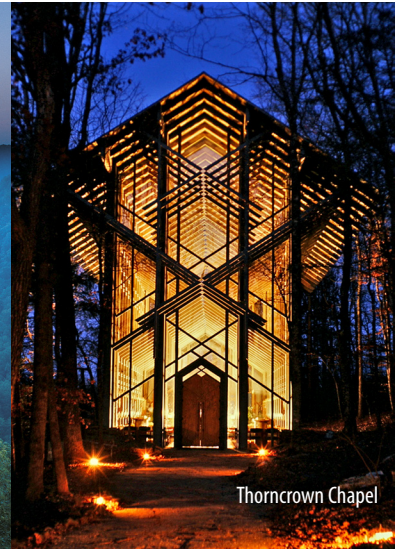




Old Mill Spring



Whitaker Point



Thorncrow Chapel

ARKANSAS TOURISM TICKER

January-August 2016



Editor's note: The Arkansas Tourism Ticker is sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association.



Arlington Hotel



Big Piney

ARKANSAS TOURISM TICKER

Following are recent reports from Arkansas' tourism industry.

Crystal Bridges celebrates five years, 2.7 million visitors

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville celebrated the fifth anniversary of its opening on Nov. 11. About 2.7 million people have visited the museum, and more than half of those visitors came from within Arkansas, according to a Crystal Bridges press release. (Nov. 10)

Newly renovated Robinson Center opens

A \$70.5 million remodel of the Robinson Center culminated Thursday (Nov. 10), on time and on budget, in a ribbon-cutting ceremony on a stage that is 31 feet lower than the previous one. The 28-month project was funded by bonds financed through an existing 2% Little Rock Advertising & Promotion tax. The arrangement was approved by voters in a special election Dec. 10, 2013. (Nov. 10)

U.S. Marshals Museum sets \$60 million fundraising goal

The United States Marshals Museum executive board has set Sept. 24, 2019 as its official opening day to coincide with the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Marshals Service. The Museum will launch a \$60 million strategic fundraising campaign for the construction and operations. (Oct. 27)

The business of selling 'Cash' brings more tourists to Northeast Arkansas

Sarah Hunt learned how to drive on Mississippi County Road 940. The gravel expanse passes a dilapidated house, a relic from the Depression era. Locals in the town of Dyess used to whisper how a rock-n-roll forefather spent his childhood in the dwelling, more shack than home after many years of hard use. (Oct. 27)



Arkansas' tourism sector remains on path for record growth in 2016

By Talk Business & Politics Staff

Up against healthy gains that began to emerge in the second half of 2015, the pace of Arkansas' tourism industry growth has slowed but it remains on pace of record growth.

For the first eight months of 2016, hospitality collections in 17 Arkansas cities is up 3.75% compared to the same period in 2015, but down from the 5.57% growth in the first four months of the the year.

Collection of the state's 2% tourism tax continues on a record pace with collections up 3.12%, according to The Arkansas Tourism Ticker.

In 2015, the Arkansas Tourism Ticker reported a 7.41% increase in hospitality tax revenue among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the report, an 8.31% increase in collections of the state's 2% tourism tax, and a 5.04% increase in Arkansas tourism industry jobs compared to 2014.

The Arkansas Tourism Ticker is managed by Talk Business & Politics, sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association, and is published every two months, or six times a year. 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.

Results for the January-August 2016 ticker report are:

3.75% increase



Hospitality tax revenue in January-August 2016 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker

3.12% increase



Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax during January-August 2016 compared to the same period in 2015

4.16% increase



Increase in Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-August 2016 compared to the same period in 2015

Hospitality tax revenue up in 13 of 17 cities surveyed, prepared food tax up more than 4%

By Talk Business & Politics Staff

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$30.059 million in January-August 2016, up 3.75% compared to the \$28.971 million in the same period of 2015.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$22.315 million in January-August 2016, up 4.01% compared to the \$21.454 million in the first eight months of 2015. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$7.743 million in January-August 2016, up 3.03% compared to the \$7.516 million in the same period of 2015.





























Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, four posted hospitality tax collection declines in the January-August period (El Dorado, down 3.21%; Pine Bluff, down 6%; Rogers, down 3.31%; and Russellville, down 16.1%). Of the 13 cities with gains, the range was a 9.6% gain in Fort Smith and 1.53% gain in Texarkana.

During the 2015, Texarkana was the only city among the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker to post an annual decline in collections. Percentage changes for the cities during the year ranged from a decline of 0.86% in Texarkana to a high of 30.2% in El Dorado.



The list of cities and collections:

( restaurant &  hotel)

- Bentonville  
- Conway  
- El Dorado 
- Eureka Springs  
- Fayetteville  
- Fort Smith 
- Harrison  
- Hot Springs  
- Jonesboro 
- Little Rock  
- North Little Rock  
- Pine Bluff  
- Rogers 
- Russellville 
- Springdale 
- Texarkana  
- Van Buren  



Statewide tourism tax revenue up 3.12% through August

By Talk Business & Politics Staff

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax generated \$10.495 million in January-August 2016, up 3.12% over the \$10.177 million in the same period of 2015. Collections have set a record in 2016 for each month except March and July.

Revenue from the 2% tax was up in the top 10 counties in terms of total revenue.

Collections of Arkansas' 2% tourism tax in 2015 totaled \$14.815 million, up 8.31% compared to the \$13.677 million in 2014. The record collections marked the first time the tax topped \$14 million and marked the fifth consecutive year of year-over-year gains of the tax.



Following are the past six years of 2% tax collections.

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

Following are the top 10 counties in terms of collecting 2% tourism tax in the January-August period, and the percentage increase/decrease from the same period in 2015.

- Pulaski:** ↑ **\$2.31 million**
up 4.56%
- Benton:** ↑ **\$1.249 million**
up 6.79%
- Garland:** ↑ **\$1.049 million**
up 2.25%
- Washington:** ↑ **\$888,926**
up 14.73%
- Carroll:** ↑ **\$476,837**
up 3.74%
- Sebastian:** ↑ **\$398,714**
up 4.86%
- Baxter:** ↑ **\$273,354**
up 7.5%
- Mississippi:** ↑ **\$251,898**
up 20.8%
- Crittenden:** ↑ **\$250,226**
up 11.44%
- Craighead:** ↑ **\$248,350**
up 5.27%



Tourism sector jobs fall from record but still above 2015 levels

By Talk Business & Politics Staff

Monthly average Arkansas tourism sector jobs in January-August was 115,100, up 4.16% compared to the 110,500 during the same period of 2015.

Travel and tourism sector employment began the year with 116,000 jobs in January, rising to a record of 117,300 jobs in February, and declining to 113,300 in July before recovering to 115,500 in August. The August employment was above the 112,300 posted in August 2015.

Sector employment in August was up 16.2% compared to the 99,400 jobs in August 2010 – a gain of 16,100 jobs in the six-year period.

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 January-August employment gains compared to the same period in 2015, with Northwest Arkansas posting the largest gain (6.98%), and the Memphis-West Memphis area posted a 0.52% decline. Following are comparisons of the monthly employment averages during the years noted.

Following are comparisons of the monthly employment averages during the years noted.



Northwest Arkansas

January-August 2016: **24,500** (up 6.98% compared to 2015)
January-August 2015: **22,900**
January-August 2010: **17,870**

Fort Smith

January-August 2016: **9,450** (up 1.6% compared to 2015)
January-August 2015: **9,300**
January-August 2010: **8,400**

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

January-August 2016: **34,540** (up 5.72% compared to 2015)
January-August 2015: **32,670**
January-August 2010: **29,410**

Memphis-West Memphis (Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-August 2016: **64,570** (down 0.52% compared to 2015)
January-August 2015: **64,910**
January-August 2010: **65,000**

Texarkana (Arkansas-Texas)

January-August 2016: **6,650** (up 2.3% compared to 2015)
January-August 2015: **6,500**
January-August 2010: **5,720**

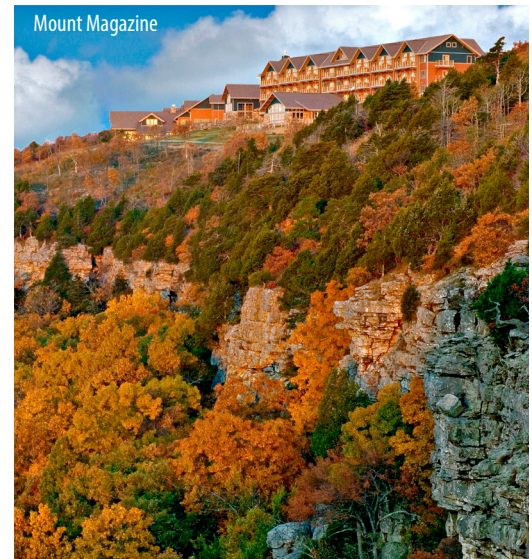


Arkansas Tourism Ticker

Tourism Tax Collections (by city)

CITIES AND COLLECTION AMOUNTS

Jan.-August 2016	Jan.-August 2015	
Bentonville \$1.493 million	\$1.428 million	up 4.55%
Conway \$2.62 million	\$1.57 million	up 1.91%
El Dorado \$241,833	\$249,847	down 3.21%
Eureka Springs \$848,831	\$775,841	up 9.4%
Fayetteville \$2.134 million	\$1.99 million	up 7.27%
Fort Smith \$603,906	\$550,988	up 9.6%
Harrison \$448,469	\$424,040	up 5.76%
Hot Springs \$4.167 million	\$3.965 million	up 5.09%
Jonesboro \$446,711	\$410,423	up 8.84%
Little Rock \$9.202 million	\$8.835 million	up 4.15%
North Little Rock \$4.632 million	\$4.484 million	up 3.31%
Pine Bluff \$1.035 million	\$1.101 million	down 6%
Rogers \$511,375	\$527,873	down 3.31%
Russellville \$237,648	\$283,250	down 16.1%
Springdale \$294,773	\$271,681	up 8.5%
Texarkana \$808,690	\$796,469	up 1.53%
Van Buren \$330,454	\$304,370	up 8.57%





ARKANSAS TOURISM *TICKER*

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