



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-October 2017



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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Following are recent reports from Arkansas' tourism industry.

Airbnb use on the rise in Arkansas

Use of the tech-enabled guest rental service Airbnb continued to increase this past year in Arkansas, according to the company, which said it logged about 78,400 guest arrivals and brought in \$8.5 million for its hosts in the area. (Jan. 25)

Downtown projects across the state recognized by Main Street Arkansas Awards

Programs in 11 counties have been honored with Main Street Arkansas and Arkansas Downtown Network awards, recognizing outstanding work in downtown revitalization, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program announced Thursday (Jan. 18). Main Street Arkansas is a division within the program. (Jan. 18)

'Art in its Natural State' exhibit to bring installations to Petit Jean Mountain

The Winthrop Rockefeller Institute is set to launch the "Art in its Natural State" exhibit that organizers hope will become an annual event and the institute director believes will help "elevate the arts community in Arkansas." The public, outdoor, temporary art exhibition will launch October 28, at the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute and Petit Jean State Park. (Jan. 14)

Hotel construction is up in Arkansas

Hotel construction in Arkansas rose 14% between December 2016 and December 2017, indicating a departure from a trend of decline in hotel construction nationwide, according to the hospitality industry statistics resource STR. In 2017, Arkansas had 47 hotel projects and 4,634 rooms either in the planning stages or under construction, according to STR data. In 2016, the state had 41 projects in the works and 4,068 rooms. (Jan. 14)

Kristine Puckett named deputy director of Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism

Kristine Puckett has been promoted to deputy tourism director by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. Puckett has worked with the tourism department since 2002 and previously was the tourism development manager. Puckett will oversee the department's marketing and operations budget, coordinate the annual Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism and work alongside state tourism director Jim Dailey. **TBP**



Hospitality tax collections, job numbers continue to rise in Arkansas' tourism industry

Arkansas' tourism sector continues to show gains in 2017 even against the tough comparisons of robust growth in 2016, with hospitality tax collections and job numbers up through the first 10 months of the year.

Collections of Arkansas' 2% tourism tax set records for each month between March and August, and the number of tourism jobs set a new record monthly employment of 121,900 in July.

2017 is on track to mark the third consecutive year of growth as measured by the Arkansas Tourism Ticker. 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. In 2015, the report showed a 7.41% increase in hospitality tax revenue among the 17 Arkansas cities, 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, 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-October ticker report



2.3% increase

Hospitality tax revenue in the 10-month period among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker



3.19% increase

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



2.63% increase

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

Hospitality tax revenue up in 11 of 17 cities surveyed, combined hotel tax up 2.94%

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$38.655 million in January-October 2017, up 2.3% compared to the \$37.78 million in the same period of 2016.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$28.303 million in January-October 2017, up 1.61% compared to the \$27.854 million in the same period of 2016. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$10.351 million in January-October 2017, up 4.3% compared to the \$9.925 million in the same period of 2016.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, four posted hospitality tax collection declines during the first 10 months of the year (El Dorado, down 9.2%; Fort Smith, down 2.8%; Jonesboro, down 0.9%; and Pine Bluff, down 0.3%). Of the 13 cities with gains, the range was a 24.2% gain in Rogers and a 0.1% gain in Fayetteville.

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.

The state's tourism tax revenue totaled \$13.809 million in the first 10 months of 2017, up 3.19% 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 \$1.763 million in June 2017. **TEP**

Past seven years of 2% tax collections

2016: \$15.461 million	2012: \$12.405 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-October period, and the percentage increase/decrease from the same period in 2016.

Pulaski		\$3.025 million up 4.76%
Benton		\$1.798 million up 8.59%
Garland		\$1.345 million up 6.95%
Washington		\$1.13 million down 3.68%
Carroll		\$646,815 down 0.48%
Sebastian		\$482,259 down 3.07%
Craighead		\$424,518 up 31.29%
Faulkner		\$335,347 up 8.22%
Baxter		\$330,959 down 3.87%
Crittenden		\$301,550 down 1.3%



Tourism sector job numbers trend positive in 2017

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in the first 10 months of 2017 was 118,340, up 2.63% compared to the same period in 2016.

Travel and tourism sector employment began the year with 114,800 jobs in January, and rose to an industry record 121,900 in July. Each month of 2017 showed a gain over the comparable month in 2016.

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 Northwest Arkansas posting the largest percentage gain (7.93%). **TBP**

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

January-October 2017: **26,400**

(up 7.93% compared to same period in 2016)

January-October 2016: **24,460**

January-October 2010: **22,740**



Fort Smith

January-October 2017: **9,600** (up 0.7%)

January-October 2016: **9,530**

January-October 2010: **8,770**

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

January-October 2017: **33,200** (down 3.85%)

January-October 2016: **34,530**

January-October 2010: **33,820**

Memphis-West Memphis (Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-October 2017: **66,900** (up 3.3%)

January-October 2016: **64,750**

January-October 2010: **64,110**

Texarkana (Arkansas-Texas)

January-October 2017: **6,800** (up 1.9%)

January-October 2016: **6,670**

January-October 2010: **6,490**



Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-October 2017	January-October 2016	% CHANGE
Bentonville	\$1.943 million	\$1.896 million	up 2.48%
Conway	\$3.353 million	\$3.287 million	up 1.98%
El Dorado	\$275,361	\$303,385	down 9.2%
Eureka Springs	\$1.147 million	\$1.121 million	up 2.3%
Fayetteville	\$2.791 million	\$2.789 million	up 0.1%
Fort Smith	\$735,263	\$756,667	down 2.8%
Harrison	\$587,940	\$570,377	up 3.1%
Hot Springs	\$5.262 million	\$5.114 million	up 2.9%
Jonesboro	\$565,530	\$570,923	down 0.9%
Little Rock	\$11.732 million	\$11.484 million	up 2.2%
North Little Rock	\$5.784 million	\$5.735 million	up 0.8%
Pine Bluff	\$1.298 million	\$1.302 million	down 0.3%
Rogers	\$859,656	\$691,932	up 24.2%
Russellville	\$374,986	\$351,614	up 6.6%
Springdale	\$397,737	\$377,308	up 5.4%
Texarkana	\$1.035 million	\$1.009 million	up 2.06%
Van Buren	\$509,742	\$411,372	up 23.9%





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