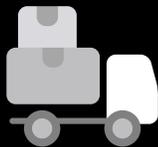
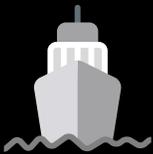
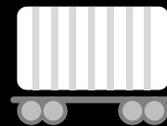




# Arkansas Transportation Report



February 2018



sponsored by The Arkansas Trucking Association & Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce



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# Arkansas River traffic up 2% in January

According to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, traffic through the first month of 2018 on the Arkansas River (McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System) totaled 890,771 tons. That's up 2% compared to the January period of 2017, and is the highest January total since 2015, when activity level on the river totaled 895,554 tons.

Inbound tonnage on the Arkansas River in January totaled 287,700 tons, down 19% compared to the same month last year. Outbound tonnage was up 13% to 428,017 tons. Internal tonnage (tons shipped between ports on the river) totaled 175,054 tons, a 24% increase from January 2017

Sand/gravel/rock shipments in January totaled 226,854 tons, up 40% from January 2017. Shipments of chemical fertilizer totaled 199,631 tons, off by 34% from the previous year. Soybeans were also big movers, with 170,800 tons, up 27%.

The big gainer? Petroleum products, which went from 6,200 tons in January 2017 to 20,500 tons in January 2018, a jump of 231%.

"The Port of Little Rock was slightly down in tonnage across the docks as we started 2018," said Bryan Day, executive director of the Little Rock Port Authority. "At this point we remain optimistic that tonnage will grow as the year progresses. Our stevedoring partner, Logistic Services Inc., is working to attract new clients and the feedback from these prospects seems to be favorable. Our existing industries are telling us that tonnage opportunities are going to be positive as the year progresses."

The Arkansas River system is 445 miles long and stretches from the confluence of the Mississippi River to the Port of Catoosa near Tulsa, Okla. The controlled waterway has 18 locks and dams, with 13 in Arkansas and five in Oklahoma. The river also has five ports: Pine Bluff, Little Rock, Fort Smith, Muskogee, Okla., and the Tulsa Port of Catoosa in Oklahoma. **TRP**

## Arkansas River tonnage

(through the first month each year)

<b>2018:</b> 890,771 tons	<b>2014:</b> 848,461 tons
<b>2017:</b> 875,767 tons	<b>2013:</b> 1,183,315 tons
<b>2016:</b> 571,450 tons	<b>2012:</b> 853,382 tons
<b>2015:</b> 895,554 tons	<b>2011:</b> 1,019,493 tons



Following are the top five categories of items moved on the river during the first month of 2018.

### Sand/gravel/rock

up 6% 

January 2018: 226,854 tons  
January 2017: 162,249 tons

### Chemical fertilizers

down 34% 

January 2018: 199,631 tons  
January 2017: 303,213 tons

### Soybeans

up 27% 

January 2018: 170,600 tons  
January 2017: 134,400 tons

### Iron/steel

down 18% 

January 2018: 87,100 tons  
January 2017: 106,400 tons

### Wheat

down 18% 

January 2018: 74,200 tons  
January 2017: 91,000 tons

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# Shipments, expenditures continue positive run, January tonnage up 2%

Not only did the Cass Freight Shipments and Expenditures Indexes extend their run of positive year-over-year comparisons, but they have become increasingly positive.

January shipments came in at 12.5% higher compared to the same month of 2017. Freight expenditures, or the total amount spent on freight, rose 14.2% over the year-ago period of January 2017. According to Donald Broughton, a chief market strategist and senior transportation analyst with Avondale Partners, who provides economic analysis for the Cass Freight Index, shipments first turned positive 16 months ago, while expenditures turned positive 13 months ago.

“The 12.5% year-over-year increase in the January Cass Shipments Index is yet another data point which confirms that the U.S. economy is strong and getting stronger,” Broughton wrote in the report.

Broughton also notes volume has continued to grow at such a pace that capacity in most modes has become extraordinarily tight. “Pricing power has erupted in those modes to levels that spark overall inflationary concerns in the broader economy,” he wrote.

In terms of expenditures, Broughton wrote January’s 14.2% increase signals capacity is tight, demand is strong and shippers are willing to pay up for services to get goods picked up and delivered in modes throughout the transportation industry.

Cass uses data from more than \$20 billion in annual freight transactions to create the Index.

The American Trucking Associations’ (ATA) For-Hire Truck Tonnage rose 2% in January, following a 0.3% decrease in December.

Compared with January 2017, the index jumped 8.8%, which was above December’s 7.5% year-over-year gain. For all of 2017, the index increased 3.8% over 2016.

“Last month’s gain in tonnage fit with the anecdotal reports we have been hearing from fleets – that freight was solid in what is typically a softer month,” ATA chief economist Bob Costello wrote in his report. “With the economy strong, the drivers of truck freight solid, and the inventory cycle in favor of motor carriers, I expect freight tonnage to remain robust in the months ahead.”

Trucking serves as a barometer of the U.S. economy, representing 70.6% of tonnage carried by all modes of domestic freight transportation, including manufactured and retail goods. Trucks hauled nearly 10.5 billion tons of freight in 2016. Motor carriers collected \$676.2 billion, or 79.8% of total revenue earned by all transport modes. **TBP**



## American Trucking Associations



**up 2%**

Truck Tonnage Index  
increase in January 2018



**down 0.2%**

Truck Tonnage Index  
decrease in December 2017



**January shipments**

**up 12.5%**

compared to January 2017 (Cass Freight Index)



**January expenditures**

**up 14.2%**

compared to January 2017 (Cass Freight Index)

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# January rail traffic drops 3.4%

Total U.S. railroad traffic in January was 1.21 million carloads, down 3.4% from January 2017, according to the Association of American Carloads (AAR). Intermodal units (Containers and trailers) in January totaled 1.31 million, up 3.5% from the same month last year. Combined there were 2.52 million U.S. carload and intermodal originations in January, up 0.1% from January 2017.

“Recent stock market gyrations remind all of us that, when it comes to things related to the economy, conditions can change quickly. For now, though, rail volumes are not flashing strong warning signs,” AAR Senior Vice President John Gray wrote in the report. “In January, intermodal picked up where it left off last year, when it set a new annual record, and several carload categories showed gains for the month. To be sure, we could do without January’s sharp fall in motor vehicle and coal carloads, among others, but we’re hopeful that the basic economy remains on a firm footing and that the recent turmoil in the markets simply represents an adjustment to potential interest rate changes.”

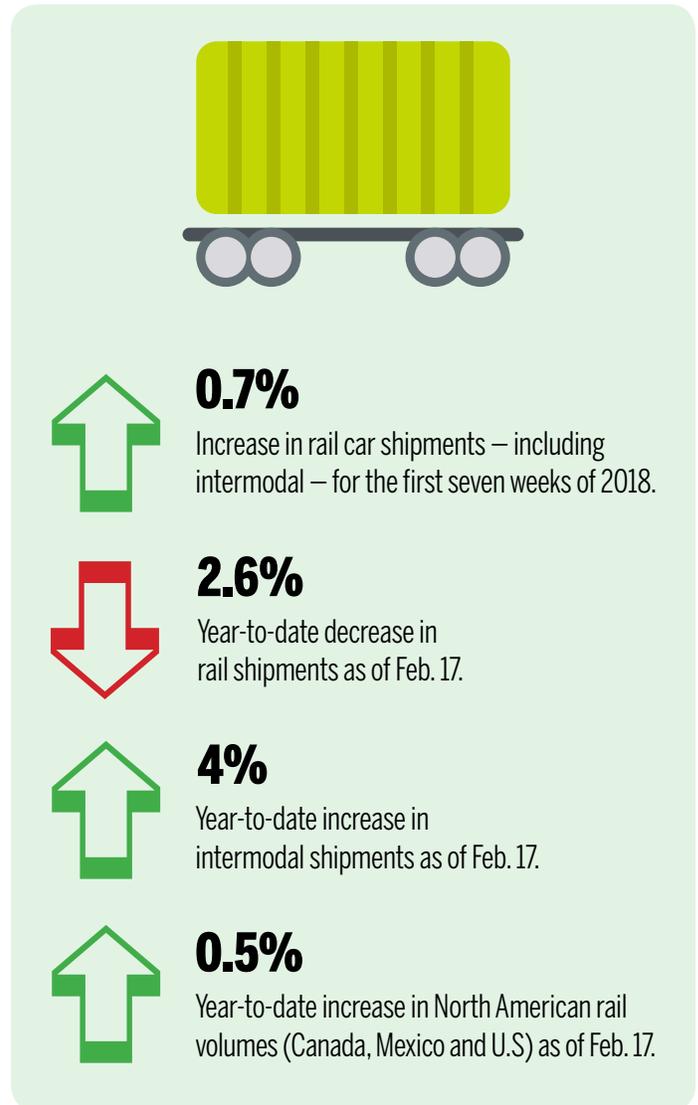
Total U.S. weekly traffic for the week ending Feb. 17 was 539,963 carloads and intermodal units, up 3.1% compared with the same week last year. Total carloads for the period were 260,454 carloads, down 0.6% compared with the same week in 2017, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 279,509 containers and trailers, up 6.8% compared to 2017.

Total combined U.S. traffic for the first seven weeks of 2018 was 3.58 million carloads and intermodal units, up less than one percent compared to last year.

Five of the 10 carload commodity groups posted an increase compared with the same week in 2017. They included nonmetallic minerals, up 1,689 carloads, to 34,048; chemicals, up 1,102 carloads, to 33,104; and petroleum and petroleum products, up 208 carloads, to 10,097. Commodity groups that posted decreases compared with the same week in 2017 included coal, down 2,978 carloads, to 87,962; grain, down 1,316 carloads, to 21,495; and miscellaneous carloads, down 235 carloads, to 9,056.

North American rail volume for the week ending Feb. 17, on 12 reporting U.S., Canadian and Mexican railroads, totaled 353,799 carloads, down 2.5% compared with the same week last year, and 363,684 intermodal units, up 6% compared with last year. Total combined weekly rail traffic in North America was 717,483 carloads and intermodal units, up 1.6%. North American rail volume for the first seven weeks of 2018 was 4,819,038 carloads and intermodal units, up 0.5% compared with 2017.

Canadian railroads reported 71,591 carloads for the week,



down 9.6%, and 66,267 intermodal units, up 6.9% compared with the same week in 2017. For the first seven weeks of 2018, Canadian railroads reported cumulative rail traffic volume of 970,562 carloads, containers and trailers, up 0.1%.

Mexican railroads reported 21,754 carloads for the week, up 1% compared with the same week last year, and 17,908 intermodal units, down 7%. Cumulative volume on Mexican railroads for the first seven weeks of 2018 was 261,422 carloads and intermodal containers and trailers, down 1.1% from the same point last year. **TBP**

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# January enplanements up at XNA, down in Little Rock and Fort Smith

Traffic was down in the first month of the year at two of Arkansas' three busiest airports.

On the heels of a record-setting 2017, Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport in Highfill, enplanements—or outbound passengers— totaled 52,184 in January, a 5.5% increase from the same month in 2017.

XNA is the state's second-largest airport, and saw a record 725,284 enplanements last year. That was an increase of 3.66% from the previous record total of 699,487 in 2016. XNA's first full year of traffic was 1999, and the airport posted eight consecutive years of enplanements gains before seeing a decline in 2008. There was also a decline from 2010 to 2011 before the current streak of gains for six consecutive years.

January enplanements at Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport in Little Rock totaled 68,585, a dip of 1.57% from January 2017. After staying below the 1 million mark for two years, enplanements at the airport rose to 1.01 million in 2017. That's up 2.02% compared to 996,897 in 2016. 2015 and 2016 were the first two years since 1991 that enplanements at the state's largest airport were below 1 million.

January enplanements at Fort Smith Regional Airport totaled 6,216, down 2.7% from 6,391 in January 2017. Enplanements for 2017 were up for the second straight year, totaling 89,582. That was a 2.4% increase from 87,488 in 2016.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, enplanements on all U.S. carriers (including domestic and international traffic) in November — the most recent federal data available — reached a new seasonally adjusted all-time high of 72.3 million, up 0.1% from October. **TBP**



## Enplanement history

### Clinton National Airport-Little Rock

2017: 1.017 million  
 2016: 996,897  
 2015: 992,712  
 2014: 1.038 million  
 2013: 1.085 million  
 2012: 1.147 million  
 2011: 1.103 million  
 2010: 1.124 million

**down 1.67%**

January 2018: 68,585

January 2017: 69,247

### Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport-Highfill

2017: 725,284  
 2016: 699,672  
 2015: 649,741  
 2014: 640,537  
 2013: 581,487  
 2012: 565,045  
 2011: 562,747  
 2010: 570,625

**up 5.22%**

January 2018: 52,184

January 2017: 49,596

### Fort Smith Regional Airport

2017: 89,582  
 2016: 87,488  
 2015: 86,704  
 2014: 92,869  
 2013: 84,520  
 2012: 86,653  
 2011: 86,234  
 2010: 86,129

**down 2.73%**

January 2018: 6,216

January 2017: 6,391

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