



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



2018 Report



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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**Following are recent reports
from Arkansas' tourism industry.**

'True Grit Trail' to connect Dardanelle and Fort Smith

Legislation approved by the Arkansas House and Senate will designate Arkansas Highway 22 between Dardanelle and Fort Smith the "True Grit Trail" in recognition of the famous novel by Arkansas author Charles Portis and the two movies based on the novel. "The popularity of the tale and the attention it brings to the state make a compelling case for renaming the portion of Arkansas Highway 22 between Dardanelle and Fort Smith the 'True Grit Trail,'" noted language in the bill. Portis' novel "True Grit" first hit the big screen with John Wayne playing the part of U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn and Arkansas native Glen Campbell in the role of La Boeuf. A remake hit theaters in 2010 with Jeff Bridges as Cogburn and Matt Damon as La Boeuf. (March 13)

Travel industry strong in Little Rock

Little Rock continues to lead the state's travel industry, according to the Little Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau's 2018 annual report. More than 6.4 million people visited Pulaski County in 2018, accounting for 22% of the state's total visitors in all 75 Arkansas counties. The largest economic impact that 6.4 million had was in travel. They generated \$1.95 billion in travel spending, accounting for 25% of the state's 2018 travel expenditures, the report stated. (March 4)

Rosanne Cash, Marty Stuart will headline Johnny Cash Heritage Festival

Two Grammy Award winners will headline the benefit concert at the 2019 Johnny Cash Heritage Festival in the cotton field adjacent to the Cash Boyhood Home in Dyess. The festival is Thursday-Saturday, Oct. 17-19. Musicians Marty Stuart and Rosanne Cash will perform at the concert that will take place Saturday afternoon, Oct. 19, as the highlight of the three-day festival, themed "Legacy, Love and Music." After successful music events in Arkansas State University's First National Bank Arena beginning in 2011, the benefit event was expanded to a three-day heritage festival in 2017 and moved to Dyess. (March 4) **TBP**



Record tax collections set for Arkansas' tourism industry in 2018

Collections of Arkansas' 2% tourism set a new record in 2018 and hospitality tax collections among 17 Arkansas cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism ticker topped the \$50 million mark in 2018.

The 2% tourism tax revenue totaled \$16.428 million in 2018, and also marked the ninth consecutive year of revenue growth.

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.

2018 marked the fourth consecutive year of growth as measured by the Arkansas Tourism Ticker. The 2017 Arkansas Tourism Ticker report showed a 2.18% gain in hospitality tax revenue among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the report, a 2.8% increase in collections of the state's 2% tourism tax, and a 2.94% increase in Arkansas tourism industry jobs compared to 2016.

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. **TBP**

Results for the 2018 Tourism Ticker report



3.1% increase

Hospitality tax revenue in 2018 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with 2017 revenue.



3.34% increase

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in 2018 compared with 2017.



1.61% increase

Increase in monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in 2018 compared with 2017.

Hospitality tax revenue up in 12 of 17 cities surveyed

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$50.847 million in 2018, up 2.1% compared with the \$49.319 million in 2017.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$37.498 million in 2017, up 2.25% compared with the \$36.673 million in 2017. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$13.349 million in 2017, up 5.56% compared with the \$12.645 million in 2017.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, five posted hospitality tax collection declines for the year (Texarkana, down 5.03%; Russellville, down 1.63%, Fort Smith, down 1.49%; Springdale, down 1.45%; and Jonesboro, down 0.59%). Of the 12 cities with gains, the range was a 26.82% gain in Rogers and a 0.56% gain in Pine Bluff.

Five cities posted hospitality tax collection declines in 2017 (El Dorado, down 7.86%; Fort Smith, down 4.08%; Jonesboro, down 2.64%; Springdale, down 0.76%; and Fayetteville, down 0.17%). Of the 12 cities with gains, the range was a 29.82% gain in Rogers and a 0.64% gain in Van Buren.

Collections of Arkansas' 2% tourism tax hit a monthly record of \$1.781 million in June 2018. **TBP**











Following are the past nine years of 2% tax collections

2018: \$16.428 million	2013: \$12.716 million
2017: \$15.897 million	2012: \$12.405 million
2016: \$15.461 million	2011: \$12.025 million
2015: \$14.815 million	2010: \$11.492 million
2014: \$13.677 million	

Tourism tax collections by county



Following are the top 10 counties in terms of collecting 2% tourism tax in 2018, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with 2017.

Pulaski		\$3.519 million up 0.55%
Benton		\$2.262 million up 7.84%
Garland		\$1.561 million up 6.08%
Washington		\$1.375 million up 4.21%
Carroll		\$742,543 up 1.31%
Sebastian		\$594,993 up 4.62%
Baxter		\$417,969 up 13.83%
Crittenden		\$417,176 up 20.26%
Craighead		\$380,038 down 21.3%
Faulkner		\$372,335 down 3.34%



Tourism job growth moderates but continues in 2018

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in 2018 was 118,560, up 1.61% compared with 116,675 in 2017.

Travel and tourism sector employment began the year with 117,900 jobs in January, rose to an industry record 120,600 in November, and ended the year with 120,500 jobs in December. Each month of 2018 showed a gain over the comparable month in 2017.

Of the eight metro areas in or connected to Arkansas, the Bureau of Labor Statistics provides tourism employment data on five. Three of the five posted 2018 employment gains compared with 2017, with Northwest Arkansas posting the largest percentage gain (4.19%). **TBP**

Monthly employment averages



Northwest Arkansas

2018: **26,800** (up 4.19%)
 2017: **25,720**
 2016: **24,250**
 2010: **18,150**

Fort Smith

2018: **9,460** (down 1.7%)
 2017: **9,630**
 2016: **9,500**
 2010: **8,450**

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

2018: **34,390** (up 3.92%)
 2017: **33,090**
 2016: **34,400**
 2010: **29,760**

Memphis-West Memphis (Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

2018: **70,530** (up 3.49%)
 2017: **68,150**
 2016: **64,840**
 2010: **65,090**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

2018: **6,920** (down 0.71%)
 2017: **6,970**
 2016: **6,650**
 2010: **5,750**



Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	2018	2017	% CHANGE
Bentonville	\$2.502 million	\$2.284 million	up 9.58%
Conway	\$4.319 million	2017: \$4 million	up 7.98%
El Dorado	\$345,472	\$325,512	up 6.13%
Eureka Springs	\$1.513 million	\$1.432 million	up 5.65%
Fayetteville	\$6.792 million	\$6.658 million	up 2%
Fort Smith	\$840,044	\$852,733	down 1.49%
Harrison	\$715,166	\$706,465	up 1.23%
Hot Springs	\$6.441 million	\$6.161 million	up 4.53%
Jonesboro	\$669,962	\$673,961	down 0.59%
Little Rock	\$14.276 million	\$13.982 million	up 2.1%
North Little Rock	\$7.068 million	\$6.921 million	up 3.29%
Pine Bluff	\$1.615 million	\$1.564 million	up 3.29%
Rogers	\$1.328 million	\$1.022 million	up 29.82%
Russellville	\$416,199	\$423,082	down 1.63%
Springdale	\$468,066	\$474,954	down 1.45%
Texarkana	\$1.169 million	\$1.231 million	down 5.03%
Van Buren	\$605,748	\$601,888	up 0.64%





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