



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-April 2019



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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

Groundbreaking set on casino in Pine Bluff

Nearly two months after the Arkansas Racing Commission unanimously approved a gaming license for the Quapaw Nation of Oklahoma in Pine Bluff, the business partnership for the Indian tribe and host of dignitaries will break ground Monday (Aug. 5) on the \$350 million gaming complex in Jefferson County. (July 31)

Mountain bike trail opened on Mt. Nebo

Arkansas' second addition to the state's Monument Trails will open Saturday (July 27) at Mount Nebo State Park in Dardanelle. Arkansas State Parks started opening Monument Trails, a collection of destination mountain biking trails, throughout the state in June. The trails will merge "world-class riding with architecture, art and nature," according to an Arkansas State Parks news release. (July 25)

Fort Smith moves to join Main Street Arkansas program

The Fort Smith Board of Directors on Tuesday (July 16) approved a resolution endorsing the city's inclusion in the Main Street Arkansas Program. It's one of the last parts of the process required, according to 64.6 Downtown Executive Director Talicia Richardson, who is leading the effort to get downtown Fort Smith in the program. (July 16)

Arts service organization opens in Northwest Arkansas

Bentonville-based Walton Family Foundation is backing a new regional arts service organization in Northwest Arkansas. The goal of the organization is to "expand access to arts, culture and heritage" in Northwest Arkansas. It will be developed at the Northwest Arkansas Council and led by executive director Allyson Esposito, who was formerly senior director of arts and culture for The Boston Foundation. (July 11) **TBP**



Tourism tax up more than 5% in first four months of 2019

January-April hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 3.9% compared with the same period in 2018, and the state's 2% tourism tax revenue posted healthy growth of 5.2% in the four-month period.

Numbers from the first four months of 2019 are up against broad gains 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 year marked the fourth consecutive year of growth as measured by the Arkansas Tourism Ticker.

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 Jan.-April 2019 Tourism Ticker report



3.9% increase

Hospitality tax revenue in Jan.-April 2019 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with the same period in 2018.



5.2% increase

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in Jan.-April 2019 compared with the same period in 2018.



3.1% increase

Increase in monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in Jan.-April 2019 compared with the same period in 2018.

Hospitality tax revenue up in 14 of 17 cities surveyed

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$17.129 million in Jan.-April 2019, up 3.9% compared with \$16.483 million in the same period in 2018.

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$50.847 million in 2018, up 2.36% compared with \$49.319 million in 2017.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$12.715 million in Jan.-April 2019, up 3.7% compared with \$12.261 million in the same period of 2018. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$4.414 million in Jan.-April 2019, up 4.55% compared with \$4.221 million in the same period of 2018.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, only three posted hospitality tax collection declines for the year (Eureka Springs, down 8.5%; Pine Bluff, down 8%; and Russellville, down 15.1%). Of the 14 cities with gains, the range was a 38.8% gain in El Dorado and a 0.54% gain in Conway.

Five cities posted hospitality tax collection declines in 2018 (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 during 2018, the range was a 26.82% gain in Rogers and a 0.56% gain in Pine Bluff. **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 2% tourism tax collections in Jan.-April 2019, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2018.

Pulaski		\$1.481 million up 34%
Benton		\$933,723 up 44.9%
Garland		\$665,459 up 57.74%
Washington		\$604,409 up 47.48%
Sebastian		\$253,584 up 36.5%
Carroll		\$234,088 up 54.27%
Crittenden		\$191,821 up 70%
Craighead		\$166,049 up 30.78%
Faulkner		\$157,856 up 38.46%
Mississippi		\$146,954 up 43.2%



Job growth continues in Arkansas' travel and tourism sector

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in Jan.-April 2019 was 120,200, up 3.1% compared with 116,630 in the same period of 2018. The sector reached record monthly employment of 120,600 in November 2018.

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 employment gains compared with the same period in 2018, with central Arkansas posting the largest percentage gain (3.13%). Following is the average monthly employment during the first four months of 2019 for the metro regions. **TBP**

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

Jan.-April 2019: **25,100**

(down 4.1% compared with the same 2018 period)

Jan.-April 2018: **26,180**

Jan.-April 2017: **24,800**

Jan.-April 2010: **17,350**

Fort Smith

Jan.-April 2019: **9,330** (up 1.63%)

Jan.-April 2018: **9,180**

Jan.-April 2017: **9,480**

Jan.-April 2010: **8,300**

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

Jan.-April 2019: **34,530** (up 3.13%)

Jan.-April 2018: **33,480**

Jan.-April 2017: **32,400**

Jan.-April 2010: **28,600**

Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

Jan.-April 2019: **68,800** (down 0.4%)

Jan.-April 2018: **69,080**

Jan.-April 2017: **67,100**

Jan.-April 2010: **63,700**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

Jan.-April 2019: **6,950** (up 1.45%)

Jan.-April 2018: **6,850**

Jan.-April 2017: **6,800**

Jan.-April 2010: **5,500**



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Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	Jan.-April 2019	Jan.-April 2018	% CHANGE
Bentonville	\$812,755	\$747,937	up 8.67%
Conway	\$1.434 million	\$1.426 million	up 0.54%
El Dorado	\$150,111	\$108,089	up 38.8%
Eureka Springs	\$358,598	\$392,107	down 8.5%
Fayetteville	\$2.282 million	\$2.174 million	up 5%
Fort Smith	\$277,706	\$271,939	up 2.1%
Harrison	\$218,476	\$215,787	up 1.2%
Hot Springs	\$2.301 million	\$2.181 million	up 5.46%
Jonesboro	\$199,955	\$192,657	up 3.8%
Little Rock	\$4.822 million	\$4.619 million	up 4.4%
North Little Rock	\$2.448 million	\$2.332 million	up 5%
Pine Bluff	\$520,421	\$565,210	down 8%
Rogers	\$432,857	\$401,911	up 7.7%
Russellville	\$110,533	\$130,202	down 15.1%
Springdale	\$134,029	\$120,556	up 11.18%
Texarkana	\$411,456	\$375,845	up 9.47%
Van Buren	\$192,368	\$188,933	up 1.8%





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