



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-June 2019



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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

Crystal Bridges announces new acquisitions to permanent collection

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville has added to its permanent collection, both historic and contemporary, with works by Kehinde Wiley, Jordan Casteel, Loie Hollowell, Henry Ossawa Tanner and more than two dozen artworks from the Gordon W. Bailey collection. (Sept. 12)

Artists from Spain, Mexico and London to be part of The Unexpected

The Unexpected will return to Fort Smith in mid-October, once again bringing contemporary art in the form of murals, music and poetry. The event could be followed by a dedication of Gateway Park, which is now under construction. The fifth edition of the urban art project will be Oct. 7-12 in downtown Fort Smith. Activities and artworks will take place throughout downtown. (Sept. 10)

Arvest buys naming rights to ballroom at Red Wolf Convention Center

The grand ballroom in the newly-constructed Embassy Suites by Hilton and Red Wolf Convention Center will be the Arvest Ballroom when the hotel opens in October. Arvest Bank bought the naming rights of the almost 15,000 square foot space for the next 17 years in an agreement with O'Reilly Hospitality Management LLC. (Sept. 10)

Metroplan report shows slight slowdown in regional growth; hypes bike trails

The latest Metroplan report shows that Central Arkansas is seeing a slowdown in its growth, but trail-oriented developments are gaining traction. The 2019 Demographic Review and Outlook chronicles trends in the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway metropolitan statistical area, including six counties in the central part of the state. (Sept. 5) **TBP**



Arkansas' tourism tax up 5.7% in first six months of 2019

There is no recession in Arkansas' travel and tourism industry. The sector continues to see gains in growth, with the state's 2% tourism tax revenue between January and June up 5.7% compared with the same period in 2018.

January-June hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 4.7% compared with the same period in 2018. That's also better than the 4% gain among the cities during the first four months of 2019.

Numbers from the first half of 2019 are up against broad gains in 2018. Collections of Arkansas' 2% tourism tax 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 in this report 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.-June 2019 Tourism Ticker report



4.7% increase

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



5.7% increase

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



3.5% increase

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



Hospitality tax revenue up in 13 of 17 cities surveyed

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$26.692 million in Jan.-June 2019, up 4.7% compared with the \$25.492 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 the \$49.319 million in 2017.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$19.731 million in Jan.-June 2019, up 4.2% compared with the \$18.939 million in the same period of 2018. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$6.96 million in Jan.-June 2019, up 6.2% compared with the \$6.552 million in the same period of 2018.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, four posted hospitality tax collection declines for the first six months (Eureka Springs, down 4.7%; Harrison, down 2.5%; Pine Bluff, down 7.88%; and Russellville, down 8.5%). Of the 13 cities with gains, the range was a 22.4% gain in El Dorado and a 2.6% 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.-June 2019, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2018.

Pulaski		\$1.907 million up 8%
Benton		\$1.169 million up 7.8%
Garland		\$901,686 up 13.7%
Washington		\$774,733 up 13.5%
Sebastian		\$321,471 up 6.5%
Carroll		\$315,447 up 0.47%
Crittenden		\$236,310 up 18.2%
Craighead		\$200,284 up 2.8%
Faulkner		\$199,192 up 2.7%
Mississippi		\$176,885 up 6.5%



Job growth up 3.5% in Arkansas' travel and tourism sector

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in Jan.-June 2019 were 120,600, up 3.5% compared with 116,450 in the same period of 2018. The sector reached record monthly employment of 122,600 in June.

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 employment gains compared with the same period in 2018, with central Arkansas posting the largest percentage gain (3.5%). Following is the average monthly employment during the first six months of 2019 for the metro regions. **TBP**

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

Jan.-June 2019: **25,500**

(down 4.8% compared with the same 2018 period)

Jan.-June 2018: **26,780**

Jan.-June 2017: **25,300**

Jan.-June 2010: **17,780**

Fort Smith

Jan.-June 2019: **9,500** (up 1.5%)

Jan.-June 2018: **9,360**

Jan.-June 2017: **9,630**

Jan.-June 2010: **8,400**

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

Jan.-June 2019: **35,200** (up 3.5%)

Jan.-June 2018: **34,000**

Jan.-June 2017: **33,050**

Jan.-June 2010: **29,250**



Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

Jan.-June 2019: **70,400** (up 0.5%)

Jan.-June 2018: **70,030**

Jan.-June 2017: **68,280**

Jan.-June 2010: **64,680**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

Jan.-June 2019: **7,050** (up 2.17%)

Jan.-June 2018: **6,900**

Jan.-June 2017: **6,960**

Jan.-June 2010: **5,640**



Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	Jan.-June 2019	Jan.-June 2018	% CHANGE
Bentonville	\$1.309 million	\$1.211 million	up 8.1%
Conway	\$2.242 million	\$2.184 million	up 2.6%
El Dorado	\$212,132	\$173,247	up 22.4%
Eureka Springs	\$661,543	\$694,487	down 4.7%
Fayetteville	\$3.524 million	\$3.348 million	up 5.2%
Fort Smith	\$457,329	\$432,423	up 5.7%
Harrison	\$345,198	\$354,166	down 2.5%
Hot Springs	\$3.572 million	\$3.324 million	up 7.4%
Jonesboro	\$326,374	\$306,866	up 6.3%
Little Rock	\$7.391 million	\$7.096 million	up 4.1%
North Little Rock	\$3.782 million	\$3.57 million	up 6%
Pine Bluff	\$782,085	\$839,249	down 7.8%
Rogers	\$711,213	\$659,643	up 7.8%
Russellville	\$184,822	\$202,182	down 8.5%
Springdale	\$239,430	\$207,018	up 15.6%
Texarkana	\$638,223	\$586,046	up 9%
Van Buren	\$310,809	\$300,910	up 3.3%





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