



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-August 2019



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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

60 artists selected for State of the Art 2020 exhibition

A Fayetteville man is among 60 artists from across the country who have been selected for a new exhibition in Bentonville next year. The works of Anthony Sonnenberg, a Texas native and assistant visiting professor in ceramics at the University of Arkansas, will be included in State of the Art 2020. The exhibition will be on view at The Momentary and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art from February 22 through May 24. It will be free for all visitors. (Nov. 12)

Game & Fish commissioners work to address generational changes

The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission is an independent state agency that oversees the protection, conservation and preservation of various species of fish and wildlife in Arkansas. The agency generates awareness of ethical and sound management principles, sets fishing and hunting regulations, and works to manage environmental awareness and wildlife populations. (Nov. 6)

Blytheville, Fort Smith first two stops for Arkansas scenic tourism photo exhibit

Arkansas' natural beauty will be showcased in a traveling exhibit produced by Arkansas Tourism. The Ritz Theater in Blytheville will be the first location to host "Arkansas's Scenic Tourism Landscapes." (Oct. 30)

Southland to phase out greyhound racing by end of 2022

Greyhound racing is on the decline nationwide and Southland Casino Racing is reacting to the trend. The West Memphis attraction, which has offered live greyhound races for 63 years, will phase out its greyhound racing operations by the end of 2022. During the next three years, Southland will work with the Arkansas Greyhound Kennel Association to end its program. (Oct. 17) **TBP**



Arkansas' tourism tax up 6.2% in the first eight months of 2019

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue between January and August was up 6.2% compared with the same period in 2018, and also a gain from the 5.2% year-over-year increase through the first six months of 2019.

June and July were the first two months the collection was above \$1.8 million.

January-August hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 5.2% compared with the same period in 2018. That's also better than the 4.7% gain among the cities during the first six months of 2019.

Numbers from the first eight months 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 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. **TPB**

Results for the Jan.-Aug. 2019 Tourism Ticker report



5.2% increase

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



6.2% increase

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



4.2% increase

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

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Hospitality tax revenue up in 14 of 17 cities surveyed

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$36.111 million in January-August 2019, up 5.2% compared with the \$34.332 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 \$26.52 million in January-August 2019, up 4.7% compared with the \$25.322 million in the same period of 2018. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$9.59 million in January-August 2019, up 6.5% compared with the \$9.009 million in the same period of 2018.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, three posted hospitality tax collection declines for the first six months (Eureka Springs, down 0.6%; Pine Bluff, down 4.3%; and Russellville, down 6.9%). Of the 14 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 17.61% gain in El Dorado and a 2.3% gain in Harrison. **TBP**

Following are the past nine years of 2% tax collections

2018: \$16.428 million

2017: \$15.897 million

2016: \$15.461 million

2015: \$14.815 million

2014: \$13.677 million

2013: \$12.716 million

2012: \$12.405 million

2011: \$12.025 million

2010: \$11.492 million

Tourism tax collections by county



Following are the top 10 counties in terms of 2% tourism tax collections in Jan.-Aug. 2019, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2018.

Pulaski		\$2.574 million up 6.7%
Benton		\$1.619 million up 6.7%
Garland		\$1.335 million up 14.7%
Washington		\$1.025 million up 12.1%
Carroll		\$497,299 up 3.7%
Sebastian		\$439,820 up 7.6%
Crittenden		\$328,891 up 20.4%
Baxter		\$304,331 down 0.9%
Faulkner		\$279,104 up 7.6%
Craighead		\$274,246, up 5.2%

Arkansas travel and tourism job numbers up 4.2%

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-August 2019 was 121,240, up 4.2% compared with 116,450 in the same period of 2018. The sector reached record monthly employment of 123,400 in September.

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 eight months of 2019 for the metro regions. [TBP](#)

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

Jan.-Aug. 2019: **25,700**

(down 4.5% compared with the same 2018 period)

Jan.-Aug. 2018: **26,900**

Jan.-Aug. 2017: **25,600**

Jan.-Aug. 2010: **17,870**



Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

Jan.-Aug. 2019: **71,300** (**up 0.7%**)

Jan.-Aug. 2018: **70,790**

Jan.-Aug. 2017: **68,730**

Jan.-Aug. 2010: **65,000**

Fort Smith

Jan.-Aug. 2019: **9,600** (**up 1%**)

Jan.-Aug. 2018: **9,500**

Jan.-Aug. 2017: **9,700**

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

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

Jan.-Aug. 2019: **35,500** (**up 3.77%**)

Jan.-Aug. 2018: **34,210**

Jan.-Aug. 2017: **33,230**

Jan.-Aug. 2010: **29,410**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

Jan.-Aug. 2019: **7,080** (**up 1.14%**)

Jan.-Aug. 2018: **7,000**

Jan.-Aug. 2017: **7,010**

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

Tourism Tax Collections

(among 17 cities)

CITY	Jan.-Aug. 2019	Jan.-Aug. 2018	% CHANGE
Bentonville	\$1.787 million	\$1.647 million	up 8.5%
Conway	\$3.012 million	\$2.897 million	up 3.95%
El Dorado	\$275,039	\$233,853	up 17.61%
Eureka Springs	\$985,435	\$991,342	down 0.6%
Fayetteville	\$4.683 million	\$4,472 million	up 4.7%
Fort Smith	\$622,621	\$584,771	up 6.5%
Harrison	\$484,766	\$474,108	up 2.3%
Hot Springs	\$4.903 million	\$4.494 million	up 9.1%
Jonesboro	\$450,303	\$430,542	up 4.6%
Little Rock	\$9.964 million	\$9.589 million	up 3.9%
North Little Rock	\$5.072 million	\$4.791 million	up 5.9%
Pine Bluff	\$1.057 million	\$1.104 million	down 4.3%
Rogers	\$973,396	\$874,009	up 11.4%
Russellville	\$246,959	\$265,134	down 6.9%
Springdale	\$326,462	\$296,622	up 10%
Texarkana	\$844,581	\$777,346	up 8.7%
Van Buren	\$420,674	\$405,860	up 3.7%



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