



# Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-April 2021



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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

## **Walton Arts Center receives \$9.8 million from government's Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program**

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program has awarded \$9.8 million to the Walton Arts Center. The grant is part of the organization's ongoing recovery plan to limit losses incurred during the COVID-19 outbreak and prepare for the upcoming seasons at both the Walton Arts Center in Fayetteville and its sister venue in Rogers, the Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion (AMP). (July 12)

## **UA gives green light for athletic venues to return to full capacity**

The University of Arkansas announced June 22 a return to full capacity for all of its athletic venues this fall without restrictions, including the 76,000-seat Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium. During the COVID-19 pandemic, school officials limited capacity to approximately 16,500 fans for each home football game at the stadium. The Southeastern Conference shortened the 2020 season to 10 games of conference-only opponents: five home and five road games. (June 22)

## **Gov. Hutchinson creates Office of Outdoor Recreation**

Gov. Asa Hutchinson announced June 21 the creation of the Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation and the expansion of outdoor recreation in the state that includes an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. The Office of Outdoor Recreation will be within the Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism and directly report to Secretary Stacy Hurst. (June 21) **TBP**



# Arkansas Tourism Ticker: Recovery comes into view, hotels still lag

The state's tourism sector showed clear signs of recovery in the first four months of 2021, but the comparisons were up against the first two months of COVID-19 shutdown in 2020. And the 2021 numbers are still below the records set in 2019.

Arkansas' travel and tourism industry, which was enjoying more than a decade of growth, posted double-digit percentage declines in key categories in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the state in March 2020.

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue in January-April 2021 was \$5.16 million, up 42.5% compared with \$3.63 million in the same period of 2020, and up 4.1% from what was a record year in 2019.

January-April 2021 hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker was up 18.7% from the same period in 2020, with hotel tax revenue up 15.9% and restaurant revenue up 19.7%.

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue in 2020 was \$13.61 million, down 22.7% compared with \$17.6 million in 2019. Collections of Arkansas' 2% tourism set a new record in 2019 and hospitality tax collections among 17 Arkansas cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism ticker topped the \$53 million mark in 2019.

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 state tourism industry's health:

- 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 January-April 2021 Tourism Ticker report



**18.7% increase**

Hospitality tax revenue in January-April 2021 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with the same period in 2020.



**42.5% increase**

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in January-April 2021 compared with the same period in 2020.



**1.8% increase**

Increase in monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-April 2021 compared with the same period in 2020.

# Hospitality tax revenue up in 12 of the 17 cities surveyed

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$16.68 million in January-April 2021, up 18.7% compared with \$14.05 million in the same period of 2020, and down 2.3% compared with \$17.13 million in the same period of 2019.

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$43.85 million in 2020, down 18% compared with \$53.49 million in 2019.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$13.09 million in January-April 2021, up 18.7% compared with \$10.93 million in the same period of 2020. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$3.59 million in the first four months of 2021, up 15.9% compared with \$3.11 million in the same period in 2020.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 12 posted hospitality tax collection increases in January-April 2021. The percentage range was a 54% decline in Rogers and a 92% increase in Eureka Springs. **TBP**

## Following are the past 11 years of 2% tax collections

<b>2020:</b> \$13.61 million	<b>2014:</b> \$13.67 million
<b>2019:</b> \$17.6 million	<b>2013:</b> \$12.71 million
<b>2018:</b> \$16.42 million	<b>2012:</b> \$12.4 million
<b>2017:</b> \$15.89 million	<b>2011:</b> \$12.02 million
<b>2016:</b> \$15.46 million	<b>2010:</b> \$11.49 million

# Tourism tax collections by county



Following are the top 10 counties in terms of 2% tourism tax collections in January-April 2021, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2020.

<b>Pulaski</b>		\$1.04 million up 22.7%
<b>Garland</b>		\$494,417 up 82.2%
<b>Benton</b>		\$446,086 down 11.4%
<b>Washington</b>		\$383,631 up 22.4%
<b>Carroll</b>		\$255,747 up 126.6%
<b>Sebastian</b>		\$225,492 up 41.6%
<b>Crittenden</b>		\$192,693 up 54.9%
<b>Craighead</b>		\$144,360 up 29.3%
<b>Faulkner</b>		\$137,562 up 42.1%
<b>Mississippi</b>		\$132,432 up 61.4%



# Arkansas travel and tourism average monthly jobs up 1.8%

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-April 2021 was 110,200, up 1.8% compared with 108,280 in the same period of 2020. The sector reached record monthly employment of 122,900 in December 2019.

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 losses compared with the same period in 2020, with the Memphis/West Memphis area posting the largest percentage decline at 8.3%. **TBP**

## Monthly employment averages

### Northwest Arkansas

January-April 2021: **24,850**  
(up 5.3% compared with the same 2020 period)

January-April 2020: **23,600**

January-April 2019: **25,100**

January-April 2010: **17,350**

### Fort Smith

January-April 2021: **8,400**  
(down 1.2%)

January-April 2020: **8,500**

January-April 2019: **9,330**

January-April 2010: **8,300**

### Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-April 2021: **28,300**  
(down 6.3%)

January-April 2020: **30,200**

January-April 2019: **34,530**

January-April 2010: **28,600**



### Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-April 2021: **56,500**  
(down 8.3%)

January-April 2020: **61,600**

January-April 2019: **68,800**

January-April 2010: **63,700**

### Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-April 2021: **6,500**  
(up 1.5%)

January-April 2020: **6,400**

January-April 2019: **6,950**

January-April 2010: **5,500**



# Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-April 2021	January-April 2020	% CHANGE
<b>Bentonville</b>	\$748,624	\$594,101	<b>up 26%</b>
<b>Conway</b>	\$1.57 million	\$1.23 million	<b>up 27%</b>
<b>El Dorado</b>	\$84,104	\$84,734	<b>down 0.74%</b>
<b>Eureka Springs</b>	\$435,162	\$226,632	<b>up 92%</b>
<b>Fayetteville</b>	\$2.42 million	\$1.86 million	<b>up 33.6%</b>
<b>Fort Smith</b>	\$262,575	\$209,268	<b>up 25.5%</b>
<b>Harrison</b>	\$244,073	\$182,719	<b>up 33.5%</b>
<b>Hot Springs</b>	\$2.38 million	\$1.64 million	<b>up 45%</b>
<b>Jonesboro</b>	\$185,330	\$216,740	<b>down 14.5%</b>
<b>Little Rock</b>	\$4.19 million	\$4.32 million	<b>down 2.9%</b>
<b>North Little Rock</b>	\$2.5 million	\$1.96 million	<b>up 27.5%</b>
<b>Pine Bluff</b>	\$585,802	\$494,147	<b>up 18.5%</b>
<b>Rogers</b>	\$164,400	\$357,229	<b>down 54%</b>
<b>Russellville</b>	\$136,142	\$102,041	<b>up 33.4%</b>
<b>Springdale</b>	\$113,786	\$119,499	<b>down 4.8%</b>
<b>Texarkana</b>	\$466,738	\$364,503	<b>up 28%</b>
<b>Van Buren</b>	\$227,949	\$172,650	<b>up 32%</b>





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