



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-June 2021



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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

Jessica Chastain to headline Arkansas Cinema Society's Filmland festival

Academy Award-nominee Jessica Chastain will headline Filmland in the Park, the Arkansas Cinema Society film festival in downtown Little Rock. The outdoor park series will run Sept. 30 through Oct. 3 at MacArthur Park. (Sept. 21)

Walton-funded program at University of Arkansas to support outdoor recreation entrepreneurs

A new program is being developed at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville that will train and support regional entrepreneurs focused on outdoor recreation-oriented hospitality, service and experience businesses, as well as outdoor industry product design and development start-ups. According to a news release from the UA, the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation is supporting the program with a \$4.1 million grant. (Sept. 8)

Eureka Springs names Madison Dawson new director of tourism

Madison Dawson has been named director of tourism for the Eureka Springs City Advertising & Promotion Commission (CAPC). Dawson will oversee tourism development, serving as an advocate for Eureka Springs and the destination's brand, and further fostering economic impact development for partners. Most recently, she served as the tourism development manager for the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce in Oklahoma. (Aug. 31)

Rosanne Cash to headline at the virtual Johnny Cash Heritage Festival

Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Rosanne Cash will perform the first-ever concert from her father's boyhood home in Dyess. This concert will headline the 2021 virtual Johnny Cash Heritage Festival slated for Oct. 15-16. 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. This year's festival will be the first to be held virtually. (Aug. 31) **TBP**



Tourism ticker shows impact of COVID-19 between March and June

Arkansas' tourism economy shows clear signs of recovery from business shutdowns in 2020, and gains above a robust sector in 2019. The state's 2% tourism tax between January and June compared with 2020 and 2019 is up 60% and up 11.1%, respectively.

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue between January and June was \$9.432 million, up 60% compared with the \$5.905 million in the same period in 2020 and up 11.1% over the same period in 2019. The 2019 collections set a record for the tax. Collections of the tax set monthly records in March, April, May and June.

January-June hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 29.6% compared with the same period in 2020, and up 2.2% compared with the same period in 2019.

The tourism industry entered 2021 following a year in which the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered much of the state and national economy for much of the year. The state's 2% tourism tax revenue fell almost 23% in 2020, and fell to levels not seen since 2014. 2019 set several records for the sector in terms of hospitality tax revenue and job gains, and marked the fifth 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 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 January-June 2021 Tourism Ticker report



29.6% increase

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



60% increase

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



6.1% increase

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



Hospitality tax revenue up in 16 of 17 cities surveyed

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$27.27 million in January-June 2021, up 29.6% compared with \$21.04 million in the same period in 2020. Collections for the first half of 2021 were also up 2.2% above \$26.69 million in the same period of 2020.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$21.1 million in January-June 2021, well ahead of \$16.59 million in the same period of 2020. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$6.16 million in January-June 2021, up 38.4% compared with \$4.45 million in the same period of 2020. Hotel tax collections in the first six months are down 11.3% compared with the same period in 2019, an indication the hotel sector has yet to rebound from the 2020 shutdowns.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 16 posted hospitality tax collection increases in January-June 2021, with Rogers being the only city to post a decline (down 21.5%). **TBP**

Following are the past 11 years of 2% tax collections

2020: \$13.61 million	2014: \$13.67 million
2019: \$17.6 million	2013: \$12.71 million
2018: \$16.42 million	2012: \$12.4 million
2017: \$15.89 million	2011: \$12.02 million
2016: \$15.46 million	2010: \$11.49 million
2015: \$14.81 million	

Tourism tax collections by county



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

Pulaski		\$1.81 million up 53.8%
Garland		\$1.01 million up 79.8%
Benton		\$813,222 up 26.7%
Washington		\$671,7449 up 58%
Carroll		\$517,990 up 99.2%
Sebastian		\$385,615 up 75%
Crittenden		\$330,421 up 66.4%
Craighead		\$252,534 up 71.1%
Faulkner		\$248,652 up 78.2%
Baxter		\$246,092 up 46.6%



Arkansas travel and tourism average monthly jobs down almost 14%

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-June 2021 was 110,400, up 6.1% compared with 104,030 in the same period of 2020. The sector first reached record monthly employment of 122,900 in December 2019, the fell precipitously to an estimated 75,000 in April 2020.

Of the eight metro areas in or connected to Arkansas, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides tourism employment data on five. Three of the five posted employment gains compared with the same period in 2020, with the central Arkansas area posting the largest percentage decline (-1.5%). Following is the average monthly employment during the first six months of 2021 for the metro regions. **TBP**

Monthly employment averages



Northwest Arkansas

January-June 2021: **25,550**
(up 7.6% compared with the same 2020 period)

January-June 2020: **23,700**

January-June 2019: **26,780**

January-June 2010: **17,780**

Fort Smith

January-June 2021: **8,700**

(up 1.2%)

January-June 2020: **8,600**

January-June 2019: **9,500**

January-June 2010: **8,380**

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-June 2021: **29,250**

(down 1.5%)

January-June 2020: **29,700**

January-June 2019: **35,200**

January-June 2010: **29,250**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-June 2021: **6,600**

(up 4.7%)

January-June 2020: **6,300**

January-June 2019: **7,050**

January-June 2010: **5,600**

Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-June 2021: **58,830**

(down 0.62%)

January-June 2020: **59,200**

January-June 2019: **70,400**

January-June 2010: **64,680**



Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-June 2021	January-June 2020	% CHANGE
Bentonville	\$1.23 million	\$861,616	up 43.6%
Conway	\$2.49 million	\$1.87 million	up 32.7%
El Dorado	\$164,292	\$126,312	up 30%
Eureka Springs	\$826,895	\$412,734	up 100.35%
Fayetteville	\$3.83 million	\$2.78 million	up 37.5%
Fort Smith	\$459,036	\$288,568	up 59%
Harrison	\$414,136	\$292,003	up 41.8%
Hot Springs	\$3.97 million	\$2.93 million	up 35.3%
Jonesboro	\$332,535	\$275,579	up 20.7%
Little Rock	\$6.81 million	\$5.96 million	up 14.3%
North Little Rock	\$4.01 million	\$3 million	up 33.5%
Pine Bluff	\$933,853	\$746,093	up 25.2%
Rogers	\$306,820	\$391,071	down 21.5%
Russellville	\$216,285	\$145,606	up 48.5%
Springdale	\$182,233	\$147,828	up 23.3%
Texarkana	\$762,473	\$558,293	up 36.6%
Van Buren	\$364,876	\$274,008	up 33.1%





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