



# Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-June 2022



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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

### Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival returns

The Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival (HSDFF) will return Oct. 7-15 and be held at the Arlington Resort Hotel & Spa. HSDFF announced that Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort will be the presenting sponsor for the 31<sup>st</sup> annual festival. Christine Choy ("Who Killed Vincent Chin?") will receive the film festival's Impact Award, and Brent Renaud will posthumously be honored with the Career Achievement Award. (Sept. 11)

### \$36 million mixed use space coming to Little Rock

Minneapolis-based Artspace Projects, in partnership with Little Rock-based Windgate Foundation, announced plans to advance a new mixed-use project for artists in Little Rock's East Village neighborhood, the Artspace Windgate Campus. The anticipated project construction start timeline is Summer 2023 and completion in Fall 2024. (Sept. 7)

### Peacemaker impact

Peacemaker Festival organizers are touting a \$3.746 million economic impact with its recently concluded 2022 event in downtown Fort Smith, and festival co-founder Trent Goins says one of the two 2023 headliners is already booked. But he isn't saying who it is. The 2022 festival – held July 29-30 – marked the eighth year for the live music event held in Harry E. Kelley Park in downtown Fort Smith. (Aug. 25)

### 'We the People' speakers

Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Yo-Yo Ma are among the featured lecturers coming to Bentonville this fall as part of programming at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Museum officials announced details about a lineup of public talks plus other live and virtual programs in connection with the exhibition "We the People: The Radical Notion of Democracy." (Aug. 24) **TBP**



# Tourism ticker shows broad recovery in Arkansas' tourism sector

High fuel prices, inflation and concerns about a U.S. recession have yet to slow Arkansas' tourism industry based on tax revenue and job numbers in the first six months of 2022. The industry continues a strong rebound from COVID shutdowns.

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue between January and June was \$11.701 million, up 24% compared with \$9.43 million in the same period of 2021 and up 37.8% over the same period in pre-pandemic 2019. The 2021 collections of the tax (\$20.54 million) set an annual record for the tax, and revenue has set a new monthly record since March 2020 — a 16-month consecutive record pace.

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.

January-June hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 17.5% compared with the same period in 2021, and up 20% compared with the same period in pre-pandemic 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 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 2022 Tourism Ticker report



**17.5% increase**

Hospitality tax revenue in January-June 2022 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with the same period in 2021.



**24% increase**

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in January-June 2022 compared with the same period in 2021.



**9.6% increase**

Gain in monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-June 2022 compared with the same period in 2021.



# Hospitality tax revenue in 17 cities up almost 18%

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$32.034 million in January-June 2022, up 17.5% compared with \$27.27 million in the same period of 2021. Collections were also up 20% above \$26.69 million in the same pre-pandemic period of 2019.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$23.805 million in January-June 2022, ahead of \$21.1 million in the same period of 2021. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$8.22 million in January-June 2022, up 33.5% compared with \$6.16 million in the same period of 2021. Hotel tax collections in the first two months are also above \$6.95 million in the first six months of 2019, which suggests the hotel industry has recovered from the pandemic shutdowns.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 15 posted hospitality tax collection increases in January-June 2022, with Russellville (down 2%) and Texarkana (down 3.2%) posting declines. **TBP**

## Following are the past 12 years of 2% tax collections

<b>2021:</b> \$20.54 million	<b>2015:</b> \$14.81 million
<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-June 2022, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2021.

<b>Pulaski</b>		\$1.42 million up 38.4%
<b>Garland</b>		\$720,231 up 45.7%
<b>Benton</b>		\$682,925 up 53.1%
<b>Washington</b>		\$587,743 up 53.2%
<b>Sebastian</b>		\$285,829 up 26.8%
<b>Crittenden</b>		\$269,497 up 39.9%
<b>Carroll</b>		\$257,148 up 0.5%
<b>Craighead</b>		\$217,497 up 50.7%
<b>Mississippi</b>		\$182,334 up 37.7%
<b>Faulkner</b>		\$174,982 up 27.2%



# Job gains continue in Arkansas' travel and tourism industry

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-June 2022 was 121,020, up 9.6% compared with 110,400 in the same period of 2021. The sector first reached record monthly employment of 124,400 in February 2020, then fell precipitously to an estimated 74,100 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. All five posted employment gains compared with the same period in 2021, with the central Arkansas area posting the largest percentage increase at 15.8%. Following is the average monthly employment during the first two months of 2022 for the metro regions. **TBP**

## Monthly employment averages

### Northwest Arkansas

January-June 2022: **26,980**  
(up 5.6% compared with the same 2021 period)

January-June 2021: **25,550**

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

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

### Fort Smith

January-June 2022: **9,520**  
(up 9.4%)

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

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

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

### Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-June 2022: **34,000**  
(up 16.2%)

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

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

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



### Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-June 2022: **64,410**  
(up 9.5%)

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

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

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

### Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-June 2022: **7,480**  
(up 13.3%)

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

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

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



# Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-April 2022	January-April 2021	% CHANGE
<b>Bentonville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.6 million	\$1.237 million	<b>up 29.6%</b>
<b>Conway</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$2.62 million	\$2.49 million	<b>up 5.1%</b>
<b>El Dorado</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$194,094	\$157,466	<b>up 23.3%</b>
<b>Eureka Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$837,581	\$826,895	<b>up 1.3%</b>
<b>Fayetteville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$4.44 million	\$3.83 million	<b>up 15.9%</b>
<b>Fort Smith</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$544,388	\$459,036	<b>up 18.6%</b>
<b>Harrison</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$435,385	\$414,136	<b>up 5.1%</b>
<b>Hot Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$4.45 million	\$3.97 million	<b>up 12.2%</b>
<b>Jonesboro</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax; 2% restaurant tax implemented Jan. 1)</small>	\$2.9 million	\$332,535	<b>up 773.8%</b>
<b>Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$8.2 million	\$6.81 million	<b>up 20.3%</b>
<b>North Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$4.56 million	\$4.01 million	<b>up 13.5%</b>
<b>Pine Bluff</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.42 million	\$933,853	<b>up 53%</b>
<b>Rogers</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$557,275	\$308,329	<b>up 80.7%</b>
<b>Russellville</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$211,964	\$216,285	<b>down 2%</b>
<b>Springdale</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$260,662	\$182,233	<b>up 43%</b>
<b>Texarkana</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$738,252	\$762,473	<b>down 3.2%</b>
<b>Van Buren</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$394,784	\$364,876	<b>up 8.2%</b>





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