



# Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-August 2022



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



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

## **Arts money**

Bank of America donated \$250,000 to the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in Little Rock to help complete its renovation campaign on the museum's MacArthur Park campus. The museum recently extended its capital campaign to a new goal of \$155 million. It plans to re-open in April 2023. (Nov. 13)

## **Paragould trail**

The city of Paragould celebrated the official opening of the 8 Mile Creek Trail at the Rotary Park Trailhead. The 8 Mile Creek Trail will provide urban biking, hiking, and walking trails. It connects city parks, downtown, and several public-school sites. (Nov. 2)

## **Sports betting rise**

A lot of folks in Arkansas are putting their chips in on the wide variety of sports betting, with wagers totaling a record \$21.18 million in September, well above the previous record of \$12.6 million in June, according to the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration. (Oct. 31)

## **Whisky jobs**

Owners of a whiskey distillery want to expand operations to the Historic District at Chaffee Crossing. The Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority (FCRA) approved the \$675,000 sale of Building 339 and 5.32 acres to Axe and the Oak Distillery. Colorado Springs-based Axe and the Oak Distillery was formed by three whiskey aficionados and friends — Jason Jackson, Casey Ross and Eric Baldini – in 2013 in Colorado. (Oct. 24) **TBP**



# Tourism ticker shows clear recovery and growth in tourism industry

The state's 2% tourism tax and tourism and travel industry jobs set new records in the first eight months of 2022, showing that the industry is recovering and growing from the pandemic shutdowns of 2020.

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue between January and August was \$16.31 million, up 18% compared with \$13.81 million in the same period of 2021 and up 36.5% compared with 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 set a new monthly record in June of \$2.52 million.

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-August hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 16.14% compared with the same period in 2021, and up 20.6% 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-August 2022 Tourism Ticker report



**16.14% increase**

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



**18% increase**

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



**10.2% increase**

Gain in monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-August 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 \$43.64 million in January-August 2022, up 16.14% compared with \$37.57 million in the same period of 2021. Collections were also up 20.6% above \$36.16 million in the same pre-pandemic period of 2019.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$32.48 million in January-August 2022, ahead of \$28.92 million in the same period of 2021. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$11.15 million in January-August 2022, up 29% compared with \$8.64 million in the same period of 2021. Hotel tax collections in the first eight months are also above \$9.64 million in the first eight months of 2019, which indicates the hotel industry has recovered from pandemic shutdowns.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 14 posted hospitality tax collection increases in January-August 2022, with Eureka Springs (down 0.43%), 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-August 2022, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2021.

<b>Pulaski</b>		\$3.17 million up 22.3%
<b>Benton</b>		\$1.93 million up 60.1%
<b>Garland</b>		\$1.82 million up 13.8%
<b>Washington</b>		\$1.346 million up 40.8%
<b>Carroll</b>		\$749,575 down 5.8%
<b>Sebastian</b>		\$658,868 up 22.6%
<b>Crittenden</b>		\$580,169 up 18.5%
<b>Baxter</b>		\$461,917 up 15.3%
<b>Craighead</b>		\$453,925 up 27.6%
<b>Faulkner</b>		\$395,423 up 13.2%



# Job numbers up more than 10% in Arkansas' travel and tourism sector

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in Jan.-August 2022 was 121,800, up 10.2% compared with 110,500 in the same period of 2021. The sector reached record monthly employment of 124,800 in September. The sector had 14,400 jobs 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 16.9%. Following is the average monthly employment during the first eight months of 2022 for the metro regions. **TBP**

## Monthly employment averages

### Northwest Arkansas

January-August 2022: **27,350**  
(up 6% compared with the same 2021 period)

January-August 2021: **25,800**

January-August 2020: **24,100**

January-August 2010: **17,870**

### Fort Smith

January-August 2022: **9,700**  
(up 10.2% compared with the same 2021 period)

January-August 2021: **8,800**

January-August 2020: **8,700**

January-August 2010: **8,400**

### Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-August 2022: **34,710**  
(up 16.9% compared with the same 2021 period)

January-August 2021: **29,700**

January-August 2020: **29,800**

January-August 2010: **29,410**



### Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-August 2022: **65,460**  
(up 9.8% compared with the same 2021 period)

January-August 2021: **59,600**

January-August 2020: **59,800**

January-August 2010: **65,000**

### Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-August 2022: **7,570**  
(up 14.7% compared with the same 2021 period)

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

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

January-August 2010: **5,640**



# Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-August 2022	January-August 2021	% CHANGE
<b>Bentonville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$2.2 million	\$1.72 million	<b>up 27.9%</b>
<b>Conway</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$3.63 million	\$3.39 million	<b>up 6.9%</b>
<b>El Dorado</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$273,415	\$214,607	<b>up 27.4%</b>
<b>Eureka Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.26 million	\$1.26 million	<b>down 0.46%</b>
<b>Fayetteville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$5.98 million	\$5.14 million	<b>up 16.5%</b>
<b>Fort Smith</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$743,257	\$630,712	<b>up 17.8%</b>
<b>Harrison</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$589,588	\$566,129	<b>up 4.1%</b>
<b>Hot Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$6.27 million	\$5.55 million	<b>up 12.8%</b>
<b>Jonesboro</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax; 2% restaurant tax implemented Jan. 1)</small>	\$3.62 million	\$486,280	<b>up 645.5%</b>
<b>Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$11.14 million	\$9.55 million	<b>up 16.6%</b>
<b>North Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$6.14 million	\$5.45 million	<b>up 12.8%</b>
<b>Pine Bluff</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.77 million	\$1.26 million	<b>up 40%</b>
<b>Rogers</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$854,163	\$497,430	<b>up 71.7%</b>
<b>Russellville</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$281,138	\$289,916	<b>down 3%</b>
<b>Springdale</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$361,981	\$259,748	<b>up 39.4%</b>
<b>Texarkana</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.01 million	\$1.04 million	<b>down 2.5%</b>
<b>Van Buren</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$532,716	\$492,517	<b>up 8.2%</b>





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