



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-December 2022



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



Arkansas Tourism Ticker

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

Outdoor tourism growth

From hunting and fishing to mountain biking, hiking, boating and camping, Arkansas is lauded for its abundant outdoor recreation opportunities. According to the most recent data published this past November by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Arkansas' outdoor recreation economy grew 23% from 2020 to 2021. That is the largest recorded measure for Arkansas since the BEA started calculating the size of the outdoor recreation economy in 2012. (March 5)

No more AQ

The original AQ Chicken House in Springdale will close March 18 after nearly 76 years in business at 1207 N. Thompson St. It's the sole location for the restaurant since the Fayetteville location closed in 2016 and a Bentonville location burned nearly 20 years ago. (March 2)

Cold War Center support

The National Cold War Center has received a \$400,000 grant from the Division of Arkansas Heritage Cultural Institutions Trust Fund. The award was announced in February at the Arkansas Department of Heritage headquarters in Little Rock. (Feb. 27)

Marshals Museum funding

The U.S. Marshals Museum (USMM) Foundation announced Feb. 23 that the museum received an \$800,000 Division of Arkansas Heritage Cultural Institutions Trust Fund award. The prestigious awards were announced Feb. 22 at the division's headquarters in Little Rock. (Feb. 23) **TBP**



Arkansas Tourism Ticker: Tourism tax revenue, job numbers set new records

Arkansas' travel and tourism sector posted healthy revenue and job gains in 2022 compared with 2021, even when factoring in inflation. The state's 2% tourism tax set a new record in 2022.

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue in 2022 was \$24.049 million, up 17% compared with the \$20.544 million in 2021. Revenue set a new monthly record in June of \$2.528 million, with collections for each month topping \$1 million for the first time.

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.

Full year 2022 hospitality tax collections among the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 14.7% compared with 2021, and up 36.6% compared with pre-pandemic 2019.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, U.S. lodging prices were up 8.5% between January 2022 and January 2023. Prices in the "food away from home" category was up 8.3% in 2022, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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 2022 Tourism Ticker report



14.7% increase

Hospitality tax revenue in 2022 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with 2021.



17% increase

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



6% increase

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

Hospitality tax revenue in 17 cities up 14.7% in 2022

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$65.979 million in 2022, up 14.7% compared with the \$57.537 million in 2021. Collections were also up 23.3% above the \$53.491 million in the pre-pandemic 2019.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$48.776 million in 2022, ahead of the \$43.446 million in 2021. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$17.203 million in 2022, up 22.1% compared with the \$14.09 million in 2021. Hotel tax collections were also above the \$14.214 million in 2019, which indicates the hotel industry has recovered from pandemic shutdowns.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 15 posted hospitality tax collection increases in 2022, with Russellville (down 4.1%) and Texarkana (down 11.4%) posting declines. **TBP**











Following are the past 13 years of 2% tax collections

2022: \$24.04 million	2015: \$14.81 million
2021: \$20.54 million	2014: \$13.67 million
2020: \$13.61 million	2013: \$12.71 million
2019: \$17.6 million	2012: \$12.4 million
2018: \$16.42 million	2011: \$12.02 million
2017: \$15.89 million	2010: \$11.49 million
2016: \$15.46 million	

Tourism tax collections by county



Following are the top 10 counties in terms of 2% tourism tax collections in 2022, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with 2021.

Pulaski		\$4.67 million up 17.9%
Benton		\$3.03 million up 51.8%
Garland		\$2.5 million up 11.5%
Washington		\$2.05 million up 36.2%
Carroll		\$1.14 million down 3.8%
Sebastian		\$987,536 up 19.7%
Crittenden		\$863,002 up 17.1%
Craighead		\$664,160 up 19.8%
Baxter		\$626,783 up 10.3%
Faulkner		\$568,536 up 8.2%



Monthly average of Arkansas' travel and tourism jobs up 6% in 2022

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in 2022 was 122,800, up 6% compared with 115,800 in 2021. The sector reached record monthly employment of 125,700 in November. The sector began 2023 by setting a new record of 127,800 jobs in January. The sector had 124,400 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 2021, with the Memphis-West Memphis area posting the largest percentage increase at 12.7%. Following is the average monthly employment in 2022 for the metro regions. **TBP**

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

2022: **27,010**
(up 3.8% compared with the same 2021 period)

2021: **26,020**

2020: **24,750**

2010: **18,150**

Fort Smith

2022: **9,850**
(up 4.5% compared with the same 2021 period)

2021: **9,430**

2020: **8,600**

2010: **8,450**

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

2022: **35,400**
(up 11% compared with the same 2021 period)

2021: **31,880**

2020: **29,400**

2010: **29,760**



Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

2022: **65,900**
(up 12.7% compared with the same 2021 period)

2021: **58,450**

2020: **60,900**

2010: **65,090**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

2022: **7,600**
(up 8.6% compared with the same 2021 period)

2021: **7,000**

2020: **6,400**

2010: **5,750**



Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	2022	2021	% CHANGE
Bentonville <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$3.42 million	\$2.7 million	up 26.5%
Conway <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$5.59 million	\$5.18 million	up 7.9%
El Dorado <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$420,924	\$315,009	up 33.6%
Eureka Springs <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$2.08 million	\$1.868 million	up 11.4%
Fayetteville <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$9.31 million	\$8.17 million	up 14%
Fort Smith <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$1.13 million	\$961,940	up 18%
Harrison <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$898,827	\$882,988	up 1.8%
Hot Springs <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$9.17 million	\$8.21 million	up 11.6%
Jonesboro <small>(hotel and restaurant tax; 2% restaurant tax implemented Jan. 1, 2022)</small>	\$6.58 million	\$797,952	up 721.87%
Little Rock <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$16.95 million	\$14.76 million	up 14.8%
North Little Rock <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$9.2 million	\$8.23 million	up 11.8%
Pine Bluff <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$2.44 million	\$1.9 million	up 28%
Rogers <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$1.46 million	\$888,257	up 65.3%
Russellville <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$448,675	\$467,867	down 4.1%
Springdale <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$582,831	\$430,939	up 35.3%
Texarkana <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.47 million	\$1.66 million	down 11.4%
Van Buren <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$819,051	\$743,700	up 10.13%





Arkansas Tourism Ticker

Talk Business & Politics Administrative Assistant Kathy Reed contributed to this report.

Permission from Talk Business & Politics must be obtained for any use of this material.
Contact Michael Tilley at mtilley@talkbusiness.net for approval requests.

