



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-April 2024



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association



Arkansas Tourism Ticker

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

Tourism job promotions

North Little Rock Tourism has promoted three of its employees. Stephanie Slagle has been promoted to vice president of marketing & communications; Heather Kouns is vice president of strategic sales, and Shelby Morris is senior manager of sales & partnerships. (June 24)

Visitors center move

The Fort Smith Visitors Center is leaving Miss Laura's for its own dedicated space on Garrison Avenue. For 32 years, the visitor's center has been located inside Miss Laura's Social Club on North B, the site of a former bordello. (June 18)

Museum partnership

Park Plaza and the Museum of Discovery have announced a partnership to provide free educational programming for children and families. The partnership will allow Park Plaza and the Museum of Discovery to expand community access to experiences designed to boost interest and exploration in science and technology. (June 17)

Forrest City park

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, the city of Forrest City and the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas collaborated to renovate Beech Grove Park in Forrest City. Local residents, families and members of the community recently joined Forrest City Mayor Larry Bryant to open the renovated park. (June 11)

Film festival submissions

The Fort Smith International Film Festival has received a record 541 submissions for this year's event, well above the high of 452 films for the 2023 event. Festival submissions come from at least 50 countries, tribes and indigenous nations. (June 4) **TBP**



Arkansas Tourism Ticker: Tourism tax revenue up more than 7% through April

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue between January and April was \$8.11 million, up 7.4% compared with \$7.54 million in the same period of 2023. Revenue in each of the first four months of 2024 set a new record, with those gains compared to record numbers in 2023. A record for monthly collections was set in June 2023 with \$2.71 million.

The tourism tax revenue in 2023 was \$25.44 million, up 5.8% compared with \$24.04 million in 2023. Revenue in each month of 2023 set a new record, with those gains compared to record numbers in 2023. A record for monthly 2% collections was set in June 2023 with \$2.71 million.

January-April hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 1.5% compared with the same period in 2023.

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 on Page 6 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 2024 Tourism Ticker report are:



1.5% increase

Hospitality tax revenue in January-April 2024 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with the same period in 2023.



7.4% increase

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in January-April 2024 compared with the same period in 2023.



1.6% increase

Gain in monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-April 2024 compared with the same period in 2023.



Hospitality tax revenue in 17 cities up 1.5% through April

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$22.52 million in January-April 2024, up 1.5% compared with \$22.19 million in the same period of 2023.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$17.2 million in January-April 2024, up 2.8% compared with \$16.74 million in the same period of 2023. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$5.31 million in January-April 2024, down compared with \$5.45 million in the same period of 2023.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, eight posted hospitality tax collection increases in January-April 2024 compared with the same period in 2023. **TBP**











Following are the past 14 years of 2% tax collections

2023: \$25.44 million	2016: \$15.46 million
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

Tourism tax collections by county



Following are the top 10 counties in terms of 2% tourism tax collections in January-April 2024, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2023.

Pulaski		\$1.69 million up 1.9%
Benton		\$1.07 million up 11.2%
Garland		\$847,553 up 9.4%
Washington		\$671,443 up 4.6%
Sebastian		\$367,269 up 16.4%
Crittenden		\$316,898 up 5.2%
Craighead		\$278,373 up 17.9%
Carroll		\$241,548 down 1.7%
Faulkner		\$224,022 up 13.2%
Mississippi		\$214,348 up 7.3%



Travel and tourism sector sets new employment record in March

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-April 2024 was 129,050, up 1.6% compared with 127,050 in the same period of 2023. The sector reached record monthly employment of 130,200 in March. Sector jobs have fully recovered from the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when job numbers fell to an estimated 74,300 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. Of the five, two posted employment gains compared with the same period in 2023, with Northwest Arkansas posting the largest percentage increase at 2.4%. Following is the average monthly employment during the first four months of 2024 for the metro regions. **TBP**

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

January-April 2024: **30,750**

(up 2.4% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-April 2023: **30,025**

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

Fort Smith

January-April 2024: **10,000**

(up 1.8% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-April 2023: **9,825**

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

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-April 2024: **33,850**

(down 1.2% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-April 2023: **34,250**

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



Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-April 2024: **60,725**

(down 1.1% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-April 2023: **61,400**

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

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-April 2024: **6,750**

(unchanged compared with the same 2023 period)

January-April 2023: **6,750**

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



Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-April 2024	January-April 2023	% CHANGE
Bentonville <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.26 million	\$1.14 million	up 10.3%
Conway <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$2.1 million	\$2.02 million	up 3.7%
El Dorado <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$153,177	\$159,458	down 4%
Eureka Springs <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$499,551	\$569,429	down 12.3%
Fayetteville <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$3.1 million	\$3.06 million	up 1.4%
Fort Smith <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$365,293	\$372,641	down 2%
Harrison <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$294,309	\$303,309	down 3%
Hot Springs <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$3.13 million	\$3.14 million	down 0.04%
Jonesboro <small>(hotel and restaurant tax; 2% restaurant tax implemented January 1, 2022)</small>	\$2.56 million	\$2.5 million	up 2.5%
Little Rock <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$5.98 million	\$5.88 million	up 1.7%
North Little Rock <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$3.2 million	\$3.13 million	up 2.3%
Pine Bluff <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$723,016	\$715,505	up 1.05%
Rogers <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$402,057	\$404,952	down 0.7%
Russellville <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$121,291	\$155,231	down 21.9%
Springdale <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$138,853	\$162,662	down 14.6%
Texarkana <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$456,860	\$482,719	down 5.4%
Van Buren <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$275,886	\$263,319	up 4.8%





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

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Contact Michael Tilley at mtilley@talkbusiness.net for approval requests.

