



# Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-June 2024



sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association & the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism



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

## **Cold War speaker**

The National Cold War Center (NCWC) will host its annual Cold War Party on Nov. 2 following a Cold War Conversation event with Gary Powers Jr., on Nov. 1. The event will be held at the Arkansas Aeroplex in Blytheville. (Oct. 1)

## **Cash statue**

Singer, songwriter, activist and Arkansas native Johnny Cash is now represented in the halls of the U.S. Capitol. A statue of Cash, who was born in Kingsland, Ark., and spent his childhood in Dyess in the Arkansas Delta, was unveiled Sept. 24 in Emancipation Hall at the national capitol complex. (Sept. 24)

## **XNA passenger projection**

Northwest Arkansas National Airport (XNA) in Highfill is projected to have about 1.1 million enplanements, or passengers flying out, this year, officials said. If it hits the mark, XNA would have over 100,000 more enplanements than last year. (Sept. 24)

## **Motorcycle money**

Eagle Wing Motorcycle Association, a national organization dedicated to the mission of friendship and safe riding, announced in August that its Eagle Wing Rendezvous Conference 2025 will be in Fort Smith, said Ashleigh Bachert, executive director of the Fort Smith CVB. (Sept. 4) **TBP**



# Arkansas Tourism Ticker: 2% tourism tax sets new monthly record in June

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue between January and June was \$13.51 million, up 6.1% compared with \$12.74 million in the same period of 2023. Revenue in each of the first six months of 2024 set a new record, with those gains compared to record numbers in 2023.

A record for monthly 2% collections was set in June with \$2.83 million.

Of the top five counties in terms of 2% tax collections, only Pulaski County posted a decline (down 2.87%), with Washington County posting the largest percentage increase at 15.08%.

The tourism tax revenue in 2023 was \$25.44 million, up 5.8% compared with \$24.04 million in 2022. Revenue in each month of 2023 set a new record, with those gains compared to record numbers in 2022.

January-June hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 4.2% compared with the same period in 2023.

The Arkansas Tourism Ticker is managed by Talk Business & Politics, and sponsored by the Arkansas Hospitality Association and the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism. 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 2024 Tourism Ticker report are:



**4.2% increase**

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



**6.1% increase**

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



**0.05% decline**

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

# Hospitality tax revenue in 17 cities up 4.2% through June

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$36.12 million in January-June 2024, up 4.2% compared with \$34.67 million in the same period of 2023.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$27.03 million in January-June 2024, up 4.7% compared with \$25.82 million in the same period of 2023. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$9.08 million in January-June 2024, down 2.8% compared with \$8.84 million in the same period of 2023.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 14 posted hospitality tax collection increases in January-June 2024 compared with the same period in 2023. **TBP**

## Following are the past 14 years of 2% tax collections

<b>2023:</b> \$25.44 million	<b>2016:</b> \$15.46 million
<b>2022:</b> \$24.04 million	<b>2015:</b> \$14.81 million
<b>2021:</b> \$20.54 million	<b>2014:</b> \$13.67 million
<b>2020:</b> \$13.61 million	<b>2013:</b> \$12.71 million
<b>2019:</b> \$17.6 million	<b>2012:</b> \$12.4 million
<b>2018:</b> \$16.42 million	<b>2011:</b> \$12.02 million
<b>2017:</b> \$15.89 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 2024, and the percentage increase/decrease compared with the same period in 2023.

<b>Pulaski</b>		\$2.61 million down 2.87%
<b>Benton</b>		\$1.91 million up 14.56%
<b>Garland</b>		\$1.4 million up 3.94%
<b>Washington</b>		\$1.24 million up 15.08%
<b>Sebastian</b>		\$580,194 up 12.16%
<b>Crittenden</b>		\$495,925 up 3%
<b>Carroll</b>		\$469,993 up 1.08%
<b>Craighead</b>		\$405,302 up 5.69%
<b>Faulkner</b>		\$352,518 up 7.28%
<b>Mississippi</b>		\$321,499 up 3.27%

# Travel and tourism sector jobs down slightly through June

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-June 2024 was 128,840, down marginally, or 0.05% compared with 128,900 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 74,700 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 2.2%. Following is the average monthly employment during the first six months of 2024 for the metro regions. **TBP**

## Monthly employment averages

### Northwest Arkansas

January-June 2024: **31,080**  
(up 2.2% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-June 2023: **30,400**  
January-June 2010: **17,780**

### Fort Smith

January-June 2024: **10,080**  
(up 0.5% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-June 2023: **10,030**  
January-June 2010: **8,380**

### Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-June 2024: **34,440**  
(down 2.4% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-June 2023: **35,300**  
January-June 2010: **29,250**



### Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-June 2024: **61,600**  
(down 2.9% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-June 2023: **63,410**  
January-June 2010: **64,680**

### Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-June 2024: **6,760**  
(down 2.7% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-June 2023: **6,950**  
January-June 2010: **5,600**

# Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-June 2024	January-June 2023	% CHANGE
<b>Bentonville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$2.03 million	\$1.85 million	<b>up 10%</b>
<b>Conway</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$3.24 million	\$3.12 million	<b>up 3.9%</b>
<b>El Dorado</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$222,234	\$210,900	<b>up 5.4%</b>
<b>Eureka Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.13 million	\$963,578	<b>up 17.6%</b>
<b>Fayetteville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$5.02 million	\$4.73 million	<b>up 6.2%</b>
<b>Fort Smith</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$628,487	\$614,654	<b>up 2.3%</b>
<b>Harrison</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$466,275	\$477,300	<b>down 2.3%</b>
<b>Hot Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$5.04 million	\$4.82 million	<b>up 4.7%</b>
<b>Jonesboro</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax; 2% restaurant tax implemented January 1, 2022)</small>	\$3.86 million	\$3.71 million	<b>up 4%</b>
<b>Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$9.29 million	\$9.13 million	<b>up 1.7%</b>
<b>North Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$5 million	\$4.92 million	<b>up 1.4%</b>
<b>Pine Bluff</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.11 million	\$1.08 million	<b>up 2.4%</b>
<b>Rogers</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$759,960	\$676,357	<b>up 12.4%</b>
<b>Russellville</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$195,962	\$249,911	<b>down 21.6%</b>
<b>Springdale</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$291,974	\$270,745	<b>up 7.8%</b>
<b>Texarkana</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$717,982	\$746,900	<b>down 3.9%</b>
<b>Van Buren</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$437,454	\$430,108	<b>up 1.7%</b>





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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](mailto:mtilley@talkbusiness.net) for approval requests.

