



# Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-October 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.**

## **Greenway planning**

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission wants feedback on the Razorback Greenway Corridor Plan. The commission is gathering feedback via public survey, which will be available through the end of May. The Walton Family Foundation's Northwest Arkansas Design Excellence Program supports the plan that's expected to guide future development along the 40-mile trail. (April 30)

## **Bentonville foodies**

Visit Bentonville recently launched video podcast "Dining Out in Bentonville" featuring Bentonville restaurants, according to a news release. Viewers can learn about Bentonville's dining culture and restaurants, its chefs, and get a recipe to try at home. (April 29)

## **New Game and Fish boss**

Doug Schoenrock was named the 20<sup>th</sup> director of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. He replaces former director Austin Booth, who resigned from the position earlier this year. Schoenrock, a hunter with many years of experience in conservation and business management, will assume the role in May 2025. (April 21)

## **Convention center sales**

The Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau announced the hiring of Stasha King Irby as its new vice president of sales and services. Irby returns to the Bureau after previously working as a sales manager with national associations. (April 17)

## **Jonesboro's 'Ridge'**

Construction on the most expensive public works project in the history of the city of Jonesboro has started. Ground was broken on the \$77 million multisport complex that city officials have spent years wrangling over the details of the project. (April 11) **TBP**

# Arkansas Tourism Ticker: 2% tourism tax revenue continued record pace

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue between January and October 2024 was \$23.085 million, up 4.63% compared with the \$22.062 million in the same period of 2023. The October revenue of \$2.506 million set a new record for the month.

A record for monthly 2% collections was set in June with \$2.839 million.

Of the top five counties in terms of 2% tax collections, Pulaski and Garland counties posted declines of 0.89% and 4.26%, respectively. Benton County posted the largest percentage increase among the top five counties at 14.76%.

The 2% tourism tax revenue in 2024 was \$25.446 million, up 5.8% compared with the \$24.049 million in 2023. Revenue in each month of 2023 set a new record, with those gains compared to record numbers in 2023.

January-October hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were up 4.77% 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-October 2024 Tourism Ticker report are:



**4.77% increase**

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



**4.63% increase**

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



**1% decline**

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

# Hospitality tax revenue in 17 cities up almost 5% through October

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$58.701 million in January-October 2024, up 4.8% compared with the \$56.026 million in the same period of 2023.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$43.754 million in January-October 2024, up 5.08% compared with the \$41.638 million in the same period of 2023. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$14.947 million in January-October 2024, up 3.9% compared with the \$14.387 million in the same period of 2023.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 15 posted hospitality tax revenue increases in January-October 2024 compared with the same period in 2023. Only Eureka Springs and Texarkana posted declines. **TBP**











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

<b>2023:</b> \$25.446 million	<b>2016:</b> \$15.461 million
<b>2022:</b> \$24.049 million	<b>2015:</b> \$14.815 million
<b>2021:</b> \$20.544 million	<b>2014:</b> \$13.677 million
<b>2020:</b> \$13.61 million	<b>2013:</b> \$12.716 million
<b>2019:</b> \$17.608 million	<b>2012:</b> \$12.405 million
<b>2018:</b> \$16.428 million	<b>2011:</b> \$12.025 million
<b>2017:</b> \$15.897 million	<b>2010:</b> \$11.492 million

## Tourism tax collections by county



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

<b>Pulaski</b>		\$4.342 million down 0.89%
<b>Benton</b>		\$3.362 million up 12.5%
<b>Garland</b>		\$2.298 million down 4.26%
<b>Washington</b>		\$2.153 million up 14.1%
<b>Sebastian</b>		\$961,134 up 8.62%
<b>Carroll</b>		\$932,186 up 1.29%
<b>Crittenden</b>		\$825,815 up 1.66%
<b>Craighead</b>		\$683,327 up 3.7%
<b>Baxter</b>		\$574,419 up 7.8%
<b>Faulkner</b>		\$562,663 up 1.01%

# Travel and tourism sector jobs down 1% through October

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-October 2024 was 128,850, down 1% compared with 130,140 in the same period of 2023. The sector reached record monthly employment in 2024 of 130,500 in December. Sector jobs have fully recovered from the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when job numbers fell to an estimated 74,200 in April 2020.

Of the seven metro areas in or connected to Arkansas, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides tourism employment data on five. Of the five, only one — Northwest Arkansas — posted employment gains compared with the same period in 2023. Following is the average monthly employment during the first 10 months of 2024 for the metro regions. **TBP**

## Monthly employment averages

### Northwest Arkansas

January-October 2024: **30,900**  
(up 0.65% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-October 2023: **30,700**

January-October 2010: **18,070**

### Fort Smith

January-October 2024: **9,200**  
(down 9.8% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-October 2023: **10,200**

January-October 2010: **8,450**

### Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-October 2024: **35,030**  
(down 1.65% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-October 2023: **34,900**

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



### Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-October 2024: **62,800**  
(down 1.7% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-October 2023: **63,900**

January-October 2010: **64,950**

### Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-October 2024: **6,700**  
(down 4.3% compared with the same 2023 period)

January-October 2023: **7,000**

January-October 2010: **5,720**

# Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-October 2024	January-October 2023	% CHANGE
<b>Bentonville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$3.614 million	\$3.092 million	<b>up 16.7%</b>
<b>Conway</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$5.463 million	\$5.245 million	<b>up 4.2%</b>
<b>El Dorado</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$418,489	\$376,211	<b>up 11.2%</b>
<b>Eureka Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.656 million	\$1.775 million	<b>down 6.7%</b>
<b>Fayetteville</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$8.52 million	\$7.97 million	<b>up 6.9%</b>
<b>Fort Smith</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$1.084 million	\$1.063 million	<b>up 2%</b>
<b>Harrison</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$830,593	\$803,172	<b>up 3.4%</b>
<b>Hot Springs</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$8.535 million	\$8.333 million	<b>up 2.4%</b>
<b>Jonesboro</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax; 2% restaurant tax implemented January 1, 2022)</small>	\$6.469 million	\$6.16 million	<b>up 5%</b>
<b>Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$15.659 million	\$15.403 million	<b>up 1.7%</b>
<b>North Little Rock</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$8.456 million	\$8.328 million	<b>up 1.5%</b>
<b>Pine Bluff</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.821 million	\$1.801 million	<b>up 1.2%</b>
<b>Rogers</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$1.399 million	\$1.319 million	<b>up 6%</b>
<b>Russellville</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$363,208	\$347,634	<b>up 4.5%</b>
<b>Springdale</b> <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$569,732	\$498,500	<b>up 14.3%</b>
<b>Texarkana</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.19 million	\$1.219 million	<b>down 2.3%</b>
<b>Van Buren</b> <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$735,662	\$711,699	<b>up 3.4%</b>





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