



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-June 2025



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.**

Outdoor education

National Park College has received approval from the Arkansas Division of Higher Education to launch a new associate of applied science degree in outdoor recreation beginning fall 2026. (Oct. 28)

Walton homesite plan

The former homesite of Bud Walton at 606 E. Central Ave. in Bentonville recently received a permit to operate as a botanical garden. The permit applicant was Rogers-based Crafton Tull, and the property owner is Peel Compton Foundation, a Bentonville nonprofit that operates Peel Museum & Botanical Garden, Compton Gardens & Arboretum, Coler Mountain Bike Preserve, and Osage Park. (Oct. 27)

Waterfowl research center

State officials have announced that a new \$7 million waterfowl research center will be built on the University of Arkansas at Monticello campus. An event, co-hosted with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, marked the creation of the Snowden Waterfowl Center of Excellence and the Dyke-Snowden Endowed Chair of Waterfowl and Wetlands. (Oct. 23)

Herman's for sale

Fayetteville restaurant Herman's Ribhouse, which was inducted into the Arkansas Food Hall of Fame last year, is looking for a buyer, the owners said. Nick and Carrie Wright posted Oct. 22 on social media that "the rumors are true — Herman's Ribhouse is officially up for sale." (Oct. 23)

The Skirmish news

The Skirmish — A Delta Gravel Festival is set to return to Jonesboro in the spring of 2026, according to the Jonesboro Advertising & Promotion Commission and All Sports Productions Inc. Registration for the event, to be held in Jonesboro for a second straight year, began Oct. 10. The four-day festival will take place May 28–31, 2026. (Oct. 1) **TBP**

Arkansas Tourism Ticker: 2% tourism tax revenue down almost 3% through June

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue declined almost 3% in the first six months of 2025 compared with the same period in 2024. Hospitality tax revenue in surveyed cities is also down through June.

The 2% tourism tax revenue between January and June was \$13.122 million, down 2.9% compared with \$13.513 million in the same period of 2024. The 2025 numbers are compared against a healthy 2024 in which the tourism tax was up 4.77% compared with 2023 collections.

Despite the 2% revenue being down through August, August 2025 set a monthly record for revenue at \$2.857 million. The previous monthly record was set in June 2024 with \$2.839 million.

January-June hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were down 1.87% compared with the same period in 2024.

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 2025 Tourism Ticker report are:



1.87% decrease

Hospitality tax revenue in January-June 2025 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with the same period in 2024.



2.9% decrease

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in January-June 2025 compared with the same period in 2024.



1.3% increase

Gain in the monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-June 2025 compared with the same period in 2024.

Hospitality tax revenue in 17 cities down through June

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$35.315 million in January-June 2025, down 1.87% compared with \$35.989 million in the same period of 2024.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$26.647 million in January-June 2025, down 1.4% compared with \$27.035 million in the same period of 2024. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$8.667 million in January-June 2025, down 3.2% compared with \$8.953 million in the same period of 2024.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, nine posted hospitality tax revenue declines in January-June 2025 compared with the same period in 2024. **TBP**

Following are the past 14 years of 2% tax collections

2024: \$26.661 million	2016: \$15.461 million
2023: \$25.446 million	2015: \$14.815 million
2022: \$24.049 million	2014: \$13.677 million
2021: \$20.544 million	2013: \$12.716 million
2020: \$13.61 million	2012: \$12.405 million
2019: \$17.608 million	2011: \$12.025 million
2018: \$16.428 million	2010: \$11.492 million

Travel and tourism sector jobs post slight gain through June

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-June 2025 was 130,433, up 1.3% compared with 128,816 in the same period of 2024. The sector in the January-June period reached record employment of 131,700 in June. 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, three — the Northwest Arkansas, Fort Smith, and Texarkana metros — posted employment gains compared with the same period in 2024. Following is the average monthly employment between January and June 2025 for the metro regions. **TBP**

Monthly employment averages

Northwest Arkansas

January-June 2025: **31,250**
(up 1.8% compared with the same 2024 period)

January-June 2024: **30,700**

Fort Smith

January-June 2025: **9,216**
(up 0.55% compared with the same 2024 period)

January-June 2024: **9,166**

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-June 2025: **35,283**
(down 1.07% compared with the same 2024 period)

January-June 2024: **35,666**



Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-June 2025: **62,133**
(down 0.6% compared with the same 2024 period)

January-June 2024: **62,516**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-June 2025: **6,783**
(up 3.6% compared with the same 2024 period)

January-June 2024: **6,550**

Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-April 2025	January-April 2024	% CHANGE
Bentonville (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$2.313 million	\$2.036 million	up 13.6%
Conway (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$2.761 million	\$3.248 million	down 14.9%
El Dorado (hotel tax)	\$172,375	\$222,234	down 22.4%
Eureka Springs (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$825,224	\$992,978	down 21.7%
Fayetteville (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$5.127 million	\$5.029 million	up 1.9%
Fort Smith (hotel tax)	\$615,623	\$628,487	down 2.05%
Harrison (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$459,430	\$466,275	down 1.5%
Hot Springs (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$5.019 million	\$5.049 million	down 0.6%
Jonesboro (hotel and restaurant tax; 2% restaurant tax implemented Jan. 1, 2024)	\$3.866 million	\$3.864 million	up 1.8%
Little Rock (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$9.576 million	\$9.294 million	up 3.03%
North Little Rock (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$5.055 million	\$5 million	up 1.1%
Pine Bluff (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$1.072 million	\$1.114 million	down 3.75%
Rogers (hotel tax)	\$784,591	\$759,960	up 3.24%
Russellville (hotel tax)	\$212,319	\$195,962	up 8.4%
Springdale (hotel tax)	\$262,319	\$291,974	down 10.1%
Texarkana (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$718,292	\$717,982	up 0.04%
Van Buren (hotel and restaurant tax)	\$425,654	\$437,454	down 2.7%





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

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