



Arkansas Tourism Ticker



January-February 2026



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.

Film Work

Fayetteville-based production studio Blk Elk was recently named a finalist at the 2026 Mountainfilm Festival, one of the most prestigious outdoor and documentary film festivals in the United States. The studio's film, "Jaunt," was selected for the festival, which takes place annually over Memorial Day weekend in Telluride, Colo. (June 4)

Crystal Bridges Expansion

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville opened its 114,000-square-foot expansion on June 6 and 7. The project, designed by Safdie Architects, expanded the 200,000-square-foot museum by about 50%. It was announced in April 2021. A cost for the expansion was not disclosed.

Jonesboro Hotel Opening

My Place Hotels, a hospitality company based in Aberdeen, S.D., has opened its second franchise in Arkansas, and it's located in Jonesboro. The 63-unit hotel is designed for short- and long-term stays. (May 20)

Berlin Wall Arrival

The largest section of the Berlin Wall housed outside of Germany now resides in Northeast Arkansas. The National Cold War Center (NCWC) in Blytheville has acquired 36 original segments of the Berlin Wall, marking a milestone in the development of the Center and its mission to preserve and interpret one of the most consequential periods in modern history. (May 14)

Fine Arts Center Restoration

The University of Arkansas School of Art recently celebrated the opening of its historic Fine Arts Center after a \$38 million restoration project. It coincided with the building's 75th anniversary. The project was supported by the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation. (May 10) **TBP**

Arkansas Tourism Ticker: 2% tourism tax revenue up more than 9% early 2026

Arkansas' 2% tourism tax revenue rose more than 9% in the first two months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025. The tax set a new February record of \$1.922 million, which was up 9.5% compared with the previous record of \$1.756 million in February 2024.

The 2% tourism tax revenue between January and February was \$3.472 million, up 9.3% compared with the \$3.177 million in the same period of 2025. The 2026 numbers are up against a 2025 in which the tourism tax revenue declined 0.26% compared with 2024 collections.

January-February hospitality tax collections among 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker were down 0.4% compared with the same period in 2025.

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-February 2026 Tourism Ticker report are:



0.4% decline

Hospitality tax revenue in January-February 2026 among 17 Arkansas cities reviewed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker compared with the same period in 2025.



9.3% increase

Collections of Arkansas' 2% statewide tourism tax in January-February 2026 compared with the same period in 2025.



3% increase

Gain in the monthly average of Arkansas' tourism industry jobs in January-February 2026 compared with the same period in 2025.

Hospitality tax revenue in 17 cities declines in early 2026

The combined hospitality tax collections in the 17 cities totaled \$10.857 million in January-February 2026, down 0.4% compared with the \$10.902 million in the same period of 2025. The decline was the result of lower hotel tax revenue.

Restaurant (prepared food tax) tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$8.587 million in January-February 2026, up 0.08% compared with the \$8.58 million in the same period of 2025. Hotel tax collections among the 17 cities totaled \$2.27 million in January-February 2026, down 2.2% compared with the \$2.322 million in the same period of 2025.

Of the 17 cities surveyed for the Arkansas Tourism Ticker, 11 posted hospitality tax revenue increases in January-February 2026 compared with the same period in 2025. **TBP**

Following are the past 16 years of Arkansas' 2% tax collections.

2025: \$26.596 million	2017: \$15.897 million
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 up 3% through February

Monthly average tourism sector jobs in January-February 2026 was 134,850, up 3% compared with 130,950 in the same period of 2025. 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 posted employment gains compared with the same period in 2025. Following is the average monthly employment between January and February 2026 for the metro regions. **TBP**

Monthly employment averages



Northwest Arkansas

January-February 2026: **33,150**
(up 6.8% compared with the same 2025 period)

January-February 2025: **31,050**

Fort Smith

January-February 2026: **9,050**
(up 2.3% compared with the same 2025 period)

January-February 2025: **8,850**

Central Arkansas

(Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway)

January-February 2026: **34,000**
(down 2% compared with the same 2025 period)

January-February 2025: **34,700**

Memphis-West Memphis

(Arkansas-Tennessee-Mississippi)

January-February 2026: **60,050**
(down 1.2% compared with the same 2025 period)

January-February 2025: **60,750**

Texarkana

(Arkansas-Texas)

January-February 2026: **6,600**
(up 1.5% compared with the same 2025 period)

January-February 2025: **6,500**

Tourism Tax Collections (among 17 cities)

CITY	January-February 2026	January-February 2025	% CHANGE
Bentonville <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$646,973	\$628,318	up 3%
Conway <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.060 million	\$1.013 million	up 4.6%
El Dorado <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$58,392	\$46,540	up 25.5%
Eureka Springs <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$218,894	\$202,147	up 8.3%
Fayetteville <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.614 million	\$1.549 million	up 4.2%
Fort Smith <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$158,956	\$158,928	flat
Harrison <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$148,513	\$140,741	up 5.5%
Hot Springs <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.402 million	\$1.422 million	down 1.5%
Jonesboro <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.242 million	\$1.303 million	down 4.7%
Little Rock <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$2.971 million	\$2.986 million	down 0.5%
North Little Rock <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$1.576 million	\$1.589 million	down 0.8%
Pine Bluff <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$329,041	\$320,086	up 2.8%
Rogers <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$190,947	\$193,453	down 1.3%
Russellville <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$56,436	\$55,819	up 1.1%
Springdale <small>(hotel tax)</small>	\$71,558	\$63,608	up 12.5%
Texarkana <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$200,952	\$225,130	down 10.7%
Van Buren <small>(hotel and restaurant tax)</small>	\$128,482	\$120,868	up 6.3%





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

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