

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cochise County's August lodging gains offset softer local retail

BENSON — Cochise County entered late summer with a split sales picture. After accounting for inflation, August retail sales were 3.7% below a year earlier, while hotel and motel activity rose 6.5%. Restaurant and bar sales were nearly level, declining 0.6%. Results for the first eight months were also mixed: retail fell 3.8%, dining increased 1.1%, and lodging gained 2.1%.

The statewide comparison was somewhat stronger in retail but weaker in lodging. Arizona retail sales increased 1.9% after inflation in August, although they remained 0.7% lower year to date. Restaurant and bar sales slipped 0.1% for the month and rose 1.4% through August. State hotel and motel sales declined 3.4% in August but were up 2.8% year to date.

Remote sellers continued to capture more spending over the longer period. Cochise County collections from businesses without a physical Arizona presence declined 1.4% after inflation in August, yet remained 10.3% above the first eight months of 2025. Statewide remote-seller activity rose 3.3% for the month and 11.4% year to date.

Benson's strongest August result came from lodging, which jumped 32.1% after inflation. That monthly increase was not enough to erase earlier weakness: hotel and motel sales were down 8.3% year to date. Retail decreased 5.7% in August and 4.5% through August, while restaurant and bar sales fell 4.4% for the month and 10.7% year to date.

Bisbee posted gains across all three categories in August. Inflation-adjusted retail sales rose 3.7%, restaurant and bar sales increased 1.3%, and lodging surged 50.3%. Through August, dining was up 4.2% and lodging 7.7%, while retail remained 3.2% below the prior-year period.

Douglas delivered the broadest sustained growth among the county's municipalities. Retail sales increased 4.9% after inflation in August and 5.8% year to date. Restaurant and bar sales climbed 26.5% for the month and 10.3% over the first eight months.

Huachuca City recorded the largest August retail gain, with inflation-adjusted sales up 36.6%. Even so, the year-to-date figure remained 8.2% below 2025, showing that one strong month did not fully reverse earlier declines.

Sierra Vista's August results moved in different directions. Retail sales fell 3.2% after inflation, and lodging dropped 22.5%. Restaurant and bar sales were down 1.4% for the month. Through August, dining remained 2.3% higher, while retail and lodging were lower by 4.0% and 8.8%, respectively.

Tombstone experienced declines in every measured category. Inflation-adjusted August sales fell 3.8% in retail, 15.7% in restaurants and bars, and 25.2% in lodging. Year-to-date comparisons were less steep but still negative: retail was down 8.0%, dining 6.0%, and lodging 4.5%.

Willcox also had a difficult month. Retail sales edged down 0.2% after inflation, restaurant and bar activity decreased 13.4%, and lodging fell 7.1%. Through August, retail remained 0.7% above the prior year, but dining was 8.6% lower and lodging was down 4.1%.

Overall, the August data point to resilience in selected hospitality markets rather than broad-based expansion. County lodging benefited from sizable increases in Benson and Bisbee, while Sierra Vista and Tombstone posted substantial declines. Retail remained soft countywide despite gains in Douglas, Bisbee, and Huachuca City.

The year-to-date picture is similarly uneven. Douglas stood out for consistent retail and dining growth, and Bisbee's lodging and dining sectors remained positive. By contrast, Benson, Sierra Vista, Tombstone, and Willcox continued to show weakness in multiple categories.

For more information on the Cochise County economy, including current and historical data, visit CochiseEconomy.com, a partnership project of Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group, Arizona G&T Cooperatives, and community sponsors.

Major industry sales

	August 2026	August 2025	Year-over-year Growth	Year-over-year Inflation-adjusted Growth	Year-to-date 2026	Year-to-date 2025	Year-to-date Growth	Year-to-date Inflation-adjusted Growth
ARIZONA								
Retail	\$8,785,037,853	\$8,334,011,433	5.4%	1.9%	\$70,981,354,307	\$69,199,433,467	2.6%	-0.7%
Restaurant/Bar	\$1,839,487,583	\$1,780,609,100	3.3%	-0.1%	\$16,219,107,545	\$15,478,640,416	4.8%	1.4%
Hotel/Motel	\$301,887,334	\$302,306,211	-0.1%	-3.4%	\$3,963,886,590	\$3,732,305,321	6.2%	2.8%
Remote Seller*	\$1,528,973,083	\$1,431,875,519	6.8%	3.3%	\$12,106,046,619	\$10,518,831,111	15.1%	11.4%
COCHISE COUNTY								
Retail	\$93,472,938	\$93,886,010	-0.4%	-3.7%	\$781,534,928	\$786,398,834	-0.6%	-3.8%
Restaurant/Bar	\$19,151,124	\$18,624,711	2.8%	-0.6%	\$156,925,535	\$150,297,828	4.4%	1.1%
Hotel/Motel	\$3,848,485	\$3,493,815	10.2%	6.5%	\$37,150,940	\$35,236,740	5.4%	2.1%
Remote Seller*	\$21,890,491	\$21,475,515	1.9%	-1.4%	\$181,571,045	\$159,337,191	14.0%	10.3%
BENSON								
Retail**	\$6,603,970	\$6,774,337	-2.5%	-5.7%	\$56,220,897	\$57,016,943	-1.4%	-4.5%
Restaurant/Bar	\$1,532,068	\$1,549,332	-1.1%	-4.4%	\$12,722,058	\$13,791,247	-7.8%	-10.7%
Hotel/Motel	\$179,943	\$131,763	36.6%	32.1%	\$2,161,179	\$2,280,281	-5.2%	-8.3%
BISBEE								
Retail	\$3,085,311	\$2,876,400	7.3%	3.7%	\$25,872,392	\$25,864,662	0.0%	-3.2%
Restaurant/Bar	\$1,358,455	\$1,296,784	4.8%	1.3%	\$10,980,744	\$10,202,910	7.6%	4.2%
Hotel/Motel	\$433,057	\$278,587	55.4%	50.3%	\$4,292,495	\$3,857,588	11.3%	7.7%
DOUGLAS								
Retail***	\$10,710,532	\$9,870,448	8.5%	4.9%	\$87,390,092	\$79,993,868	9.2%	5.8%
Restaurant/Bar	\$2,679,234	\$2,047,763	30.8%	26.5%	\$17,320,196	\$15,207,109	13.9%	10.3%
HUACHUCA CITY								
Retail	\$1,033,518	\$731,491	41.3%	36.6%	\$5,883,494	\$6,201,599	-5.1%	-8.2%
SIERRA VISTA								
Retail	\$53,998,084	\$53,968,415	0.1%	-3.2%	\$439,204,633	\$442,867,317	-0.8%	-4.0%
Restaurant/Bar	\$10,890,688	\$10,677,533	2.0%	-1.4%	\$89,262,322	\$84,460,672	5.7%	2.3%
Hotel/Motel	\$1,685,019	\$2,102,231	-19.8%	-22.5%	\$15,559,734	\$16,517,507	-5.8%	-8.8%
TOMBSTONE								
Retail	\$1,123,346	\$1,129,465	-0.5%	-3.8%	\$11,862,669	\$12,480,889	-5.0%	-8.0%
Restaurant/Bar	\$558,531	\$640,592	-12.8%	-15.7%	\$6,690,232	\$6,892,743	-2.9%	-6.0%
Hotel/Motel	\$224,007	\$289,580	-22.6%	-25.2%	\$3,670,183	\$3,719,317	-1.3%	-4.5%
WILLCOX								
Retail****	\$4,458,909	\$4,319,121	3.2%	-0.2%	\$39,880,911	\$38,344,564	4.0%	0.7%
Restaurant/Bar	\$1,103,776	\$1,233,308	-10.5%	-13.4%	\$9,997,333	\$10,585,336	-5.6%	-8.6%
Hotel/Motel	\$455,264	\$473,931	-3.9%	-7.1%	\$4,825,965	\$4,872,198	-0.9%	-4.1%

Source: Estimates by US Economic Research based on Arizona Department of Revenue tax collection data.

Note: Inflation adjustments made using CPI-U. Retail excludes food for home consumption. * Includes sales from sellers without a physical presence in Arizona and annual gross sales in-state of \$100,000 or more. **Excludes single Items over \$5,000.

Excludes single Items over \$10,000. *Excludes single Items over \$1,250.