

ARDOT Newsletter

December 2023



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Construction Management Program
- Business Development Program
- Capability Statement Design
- Business Plan Development
- Technical Assistance

Arkansas a destination for more than 48 million visitors in 2022

Arkansas Tourism is now a \$9.2 billion industry, according to an economic impact study commissioned by the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism.

The study, conducted by Tourism Economics with input from DK Shifflet, says 48.3 million people visited Arkansas in calendar year 2022, up 15.4% from 41.2 million visitors in 2021. Those additional visitors spent another \$1.2 billion from the 2021 figures.

“We can, with great confidence, say that Arkansas’ tourism industry has fully recovered – and then some – from setbacks of the Covid pandemic,” said Shea Lewis, secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism.

The highest spend categories by visitors in 2022 were in transportation, food, and lodging. According to the study, lodging accounted for the largest increase in overall visitor spending – up 23% from 2021.

“The lodging numbers are very important because the greatest bulk of 2% Tourism Reinvestment Tax dollars are generated by our lodging partners,” said Lewis. “Those dollars are almost entirely paid by out-of-state visitors and is used to fund our very successful marketing efforts.”

The 2022 2% collections increased 15.8% to \$24.3 million.

Overall, \$752 million in tax receipts from visitors were collected, which is a 15.2% increase. Of the total, \$536 million were for state taxes while the remaining \$216 million went into local coffers.

The study says each Arkansas household would need to pay an additional \$866 annually to replace visitor-generated taxes received by the state of Arkansas and local municipalities.



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What Contractors Should Know About the Build America, Buy America Act

Unpacking federal requirements for infrastructure projects

Battling back from the Great Depression, the Hoover administration passed the “Buy American Act” in 1933. The basic premise of the law was to revive and bolster the economy by requiring U.S.-sourced iron and steel mined or produced in the U.S. to be used in projects for the federal government.

In 1982 Congress passed the “Buy America Act,” which expanded the requirement that contractors utilize only U.S.-sourced iron and steel on state transportation projects receiving federal funding. The Buy America Act also expanded the items that must be U.S.-sourced to include manufactured items.

More recently, a further expansion, called the “Build America, Buy America Act” (BABA), was passed in 2021 as part of the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA). Contractors need to be aware of how the law has changed and how it could affect their businesses in new ways.

Most significantly, BABA material requirements apply to all infrastructure projects receiving federal funding — not just IIJA projects — and not only where the federal government is the contracting party, but also on projects where a state or local government entity is the contracting party. Further, “infrastructure” projects are broadly defined to include:

- Roads, tunnels and bridges
- Railways (both passenger and freight)
- Dams, ports, harbors and other maritime facilities
- Airports
- Water systems
- Electrical transmission facilities and systems
- Utilities
- Broadband infrastructure
- Buildings appurtenant to all of the above, including train and bus stations, toll facilities and even office facilities

Here are some other facts you should know about BABA:

- Along with iron, steel and manufactured products, BABA’s requirements extend for the first time to construction materials, which must also be U.S.-sourced. Construction materials are defined to include commodities such as glass, drywall, fiber-optic cable, nonferrous metals like copper and aluminum, and PVC and other plastic or polymer-based products. Aggregates and cement are excluded.

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About The ARDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on ARDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.



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