



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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**New Travel Impacts Report: Visitor Spending Rises in Washington State;
Travelers Spent \$15.2 Billion in 2010**

Annual study showcases increased economic benefits of tourism industry in Washington over 2009 levels

OLYMPIA, Wash. – In 2010, travelers to Washington spent an estimated \$15.2 billion in the state, according to the preliminary 2010 Travel Impacts Report, released today by the Department of Commerce and Washington State Tourism. The annual study shows that visitor spending increased by 7.4 percent over 2009, making 2010 the second best year on record for visitor spending in Washington State.

“This report shows that the travel industry in Washington is a significant contributor to our state’s economy as it recovers from the recession of the past two years,” said Rogers Weed, Director of the Department of Commerce. “Fueled by visitor spending, tourism supports jobs for Washingtonians, bolsters local economies and small business and contributes tax revenue for state and local governments.”

Preliminary estimates show a five percent increase in local and state tax revenues generated by travel spending in 2010, while sales tax receipts increased by less than one percent. The increased travel-related tax receipts were primarily the result of increased visitor volume rather than price increases. Hotel room rates, in particular, were virtually unchanged from 2009.

The report also shows that travel-generated employment in Washington State was virtually unchanged from 2009. This leveling of employment is consistent with national trends, as many employers choose to increase existing employees’ hours rather than hire and train new employees in periods of economic recovery.

“Tourism is critical to bolstering our local economy in Spokane,” said Cheryl Kilday, President & CEO of the Spokane Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau. “In Spokane County, visitor spending totaled an estimated \$790 million in 2009, provided more than \$14 million in local taxes and employed 9,790 residents in travel-related jobs. In this recovering economy, we depend on the revenues and jobs created by the travel industry in Washington.”

“My business is one of many in San Juan County that depends on tourism in Washington State to succeed,” said Bill Wright, owner of San Juan Safaris in Friday Harbor, Wash. “More than 14 percent of all employment in San Juan County is generated by the travel industry, so we rely on a healthy tourism market to create and sustain jobs in our community.”

The annual Washington State Travel Impacts Report studies the state’s travel industry and its statewide economic effects. Prepared for the Department of Commerce by Dean Runyan Associates, the full Travel

Impacts Report is available on Washington State Tourism's industry website, www.experiencewa.com/Industry.

Key highlights from the 2010 report include:

- **Washington's Travel Industry Creates Jobs**
Total employment directly generated by travel spending in the state was 143,800 in 2010, and travel spending generated \$4.3 billion in earnings (payroll).
- **Rural Washington Highly Dependent on Visitor Spending**
Many of Washington's less populated counties have a greater number of travel-generated jobs in relation to total employment, making those counties more dependent on the travel industry. In 2009, the six counties with more than 10 percent travel-generated jobs were all non-urban. Further, the 14 counties with more than six percent travel-generated jobs were also non-urban. Travel spending generates more than 15 percent of local sales and lodging taxes in eight counties, all of which are non-urban.
- **Tourism Generates Tax Benefits that Fund Vital Government Programs**
In 2010, travel spending in Washington generated nearly \$1 billion (\$992 million) in local and state tax revenues. On a household level, visitors from outside Washington (residents of other states or countries) generated \$240 of tax revenue for each Washington household and resident travel within the state generated an additional \$145 of tax revenue per household.

Additional report findings include:

- There were an estimated 5.66 million domestic air passenger arrivals to Washington in 2010.
- International visitors accounted for \$1.5 billion in visitor spending in 2010.
- Residents from other states accounted for \$6.8 billion in visitor spending in Washington in 2010.
- Visitors who stayed overnight in commercial lodging (hotels, motels, resorts, and bed and breakfasts) spent \$6.5 billion in 2010.

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For more information about traveling to Washington, visit www.experiencewa.com. Washington State Department of Commerce (www.commerce.wa.gov) is the lead state agency charged with enhancing and promoting sustainable community and economic vitality in Washington.

Source: Washington State Tourism