



For immediate release

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Visitor Spending in the Fox Cities Nearly \$360 million

[Fox Cities] – Visitor spending in the Fox Cities decreased 10.9% in 2009 to just under \$360,000. The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau estimates that this direct spending created 5,535 jobs and \$100.52 million in income for Fox Cities Residents.

“The numbers are disappointing, but not unexpected,” said Michelle Bauer, chair of the Bureau’s Board of Directors, “Tourism in general and business travel in particular were hit hard by the downturn in the economy. However, we have begun to see a turnaround. Our data for the first 3 months of 2010 show that occupancy at Fox Cities hotels is increasing, and in many cases on par with 2008.”

The visitor spending figures are from a statewide economic impact study conducted by Davidson-Peterson Associates of Maine.

“We’re cautiously optimistic that we will see resurgence in visitor spending for 2010,” said Lynn Peters, executive director of the Bureau. “Our first quarter numbers are promising, and we have some exciting things on tap for 2010, like the Badger State Summer Games and the Pyrotechnics Guild International (PGI) convention.”

Statewide, traveler spending exceeded \$12 billion, generating 286,394 full-time equivalent jobs and nearly \$2 billion in taxes and other fees to state and local governments. This is a testament to the power of travel and its impact on the state’s economy as one of the three pillars of industry with manufacturing and agriculture.

“Our tourism industry did a yeoman’s work in stemming losses in traveler spending with our reputation for a good value, hospitality and brand of originality,” Tourism Secretary Kelli A. Trumble said. “Now is the time to look ahead towards the coming months of recovery. According to the U.S. Travel Association, 50 million people have not yet decided whether they will travel or not. This is our opportunity to influence their decisions – to put our best face out there and encourage them to visit Wisconsin.”

The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau will be promoting the value of tourism in the area by encouraging people to come to the Visitor Center. Anyone who stops between May 10 and 14 can pick a Fox Cities prize. Guest can register to win tickets to a performance of "The Wizard of Oz" at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center in June.

People out of the area can also participate in the promotion via Facebook and Twitter.

The Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau is an economic development organization that strengthens the Fox Cities by attracting visitors in the convention, sports and leisure markets through sales, marketing and destination development.

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