



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Portland-area Visitor Spending Exceeds \$3.7 Billion in 2008, Declines in Fourth Quarter

Although Portland-area visitor spending reached an all-time high of \$3.75 billion in 2008, current economic conditions – both domestically and internationally – have put a damper on prospects for 2009. Indeed, after experiencing a decline in tourism revenues during the fourth quarter (October-December), [Travel Portland](#), the City of Portland's official destination marketing office, expects 2009 revenues to flatten or drop as both leisure travelers and meeting planners tighten their belts to ride out the recession.

Thanks to 2008's strong first three quarters, Travel Portland's just-released [visitor impact report](#) shows that the Greater Portland area enjoyed its seventh straight year of growth in visitor spending last year. According to data gathered by Dean Runyan Associates, a Portland-based firm specializing in economic and market research, travelers to the area spent more than \$3.7 billion\* last year (an increase of 3.5 percent over 2007).

"Even though we ended 2008 with strong numbers, we're not unlike a lot of other industries that saw a drop in earnings toward the end of the year," said Jeff Miller, Travel Portland president and CEO. "We're anticipating a tough 2009. The one bright spot is previously booked convention business, which will soften the downturn to some extent."

Among Portland's larger 2009 conventions are:

- June - The Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks (\$5 million Estimated Economic Impact)
- September - Association of Zoos and Aquariums (\$2.35 million EEI)
- October - The Geological Society of America (\$5.4 million EEI)
- November - Supercomputing (\$13.25 million EEI)

Last year's visitor spending included the following: food and beverage, \$589 million (a 1.5 percent increase over 2007); accommodations, \$552 million (up 4 percent); retail purchases, \$380 million (a decrease of nearly 3 percent); and cultural activities/recreation, \$185 million (down 2 percent).

Easing the tax burden for local and state residents, area travelers generated \$151 million in combined tax revenues. Of that total, \$62 million was local tax revenue. Primary tax generators include the transient lodging tax levied on the rental of hotel/motel rooms, the gasoline tax, automobile rental taxes, and corporate income taxes and personal income taxes resulting from travel-supported employment.

"When you look at the impact that visitors have on the economy, it goes far beyond direct spending at restaurants and hotels," explained Miller. "Every tax dollar contributed by visitors helps to fill the gaps in our local and state budgets. That's a benefit we can't ignore in these times."

Although the number of travel industry jobs (30,500) in the Portland area dropped slightly (a 0.3 percent decrease), employment earnings for 2008 rose to \$858 million (an increase of 3.4 percent).

The study also calculated the number of visitors to the region – an estimated 9.6 million person visits – as well as average daily expenditures. [Note: A *person visit* is defined as a trip to the region by an individual who may or may not have visited previously. For example, a traveler who visits in March and then again in July counts as two person visits.]

Per day, visitors spent an average of \$106 per person, excluding transportation costs. When segmented by type of travel, average expenditures ranged from \$154/person/day (travelers staying overnight in hotels) to \$56/person/day (visitors staying with friends or family). Day travelers who did not stay overnight spent an average of \$76/person/day.

The [Economic Impacts of Travel, 2008 – Portland, Oregon](#) report was commissioned by Travel Portland. To see the report in its entirety, visit [www.travelportland.com/media](http://www.travelportland.com/media) and click on “Portland Research.”

#### **2008 VISITOR INDUSTRY FACTS AT A GLANCE**

- Number of visitors to the Portland metro area – 9.6 million person visits
- Average expenditure by visitors – \$106/person/day
- Total visitor spending in 2008 – \$3.75 billion
- Total tax revenues paid by visitors – \$151 million

*Travel Portland is the official destination marketing organization for the city of Portland, Oregon. Its mission is to strengthen the local economy by marketing the Greater Portland region as a preferred destination for meetings, conventions and leisure travel. For more information on Travel Portland, visit [www.travelportland.com](http://www.travelportland.com). ###*

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Sources: Dean Runyan Associates; Travel Industry Association of America (TIA); STR Global (Smith Travel Research)

\*All 2008 figures are preliminary estimates and may be adjusted as additional information relating to travel in the Portland area becomes available. Due to rounding, some details may not add to totals. Most percentage increases/decreases have not been adjusted for inflation. For the purpose of the Dean Runyan study, the Portland metropolitan area is defined as Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.