

**Alaska Visitor Statistics Program VI  
Interim Visitor Volume Report**

*Fall/Winter 2013-14*

**Prepared for:  
State of Alaska**

*Department of Commerce, Community,  
and Economic Development  
Division of Economic Development*



Research-Based Consulting

Juneau  
Anchorage

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# Key Findings

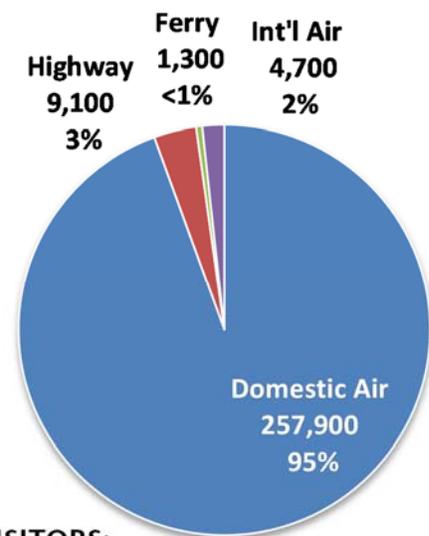
This report estimates the volume of out-of-state visitors to Alaska for the fall/winter period of October 1, 2013 to April 30, 2014, as part of the *Alaska Visitor Statistics Program VI (AVSP)*. The AVSP is conducted by McDowell Group for the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED), Division of Economic Development. Following are key findings from the study.

## Visitor Volume, Fall/Winter 2013-14

Alaska received an estimated 273,000 visitors from out of state during the fall/winter 2013-14 period. This compares to 1.7 million visitors during summer 2013. Nearly all fall/winter visitors (95 percent) exited the state via domestic air, while 3 percent exited by highway, 2 percent exited by international air, and less than 1 percent exited by ferry.

Fall/winter travel patterns differ dramatically from the summer season, when 59 percent of visitors travel by cruise ship and 37 percent enter and exit the state via air.

**CHART 1. Alaska Visitor Volume, Fall/Winter 2013-14, By Exit Mode**



**TOTAL VISITORS:  
273,000**

## Change from 2012-13

Fall/winter visitor volume in 2013-14 was up by 4 percent from 2012-13, largely attributable to a 4 percent increase in domestic air (the mode that represents nearly all exits). International air was up by 24 percent due to an increase in Japan Airlines traffic out of Fairbanks, as well as charter flight traffic related to the Arctic Winter Games. Highway exits were down by 2 percent. Ferry passengers were down by 24 percent – a seemingly dramatic decline, but only representing a loss of 400 visitors (from 1,700 to 1,300).

**TABLE 1. Visitor Volume, by Exit Mode, Fall/Winter 2012-13 and 2013-14**

Exit Mode	2012-13	2013-14	% change
Domestic air	248,300	257,900	+4%
International air	3,800	4,700	+24
Highway	9,300	9,100	-2
Ferry	1,700	1,300	-24
<b>Total</b>	<b>263,100</b>	<b>273,000</b>	<b>+4%</b>

The table on the following page shows a variety of indicators that help illustrate the fall/winter season. All figures refer to the October-April period. Note that all indicators except for the Alaska Marine Highway System figure include both resident and non-resident activity.

- Domestic air exits were up by 4 percent between 2012-13 and 2013-14, largely attributable to a 4 percent increase in Anchorage exits. All other ports showed increases as well: Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka were each up by 2 percent, Ketchikan was up by 4 percent, and Other (Petersburg/Wrangell/Yakutat/Cordova) was up by 5 percent.
- International air exits were up by 23 percent since last fall/winter. (This figure differs slightly from the 24 percent on the previous page because it refers to exits, rather than visitors.) Japan Airlines exits at Fairbanks Airport, which represent the bulk of international air passengers in fall/winter, were up by 4 percent. Several charter airlines (Air Greenland, Air North Charters, and Air Yamal) visited Fairbanks in March 2014 for the Arctic Winter Games, providing an additional boost to international passenger volume. International exits from the Anchorage Airport were down by 32 percent; however, this reflects very few passengers (290 in 2012-13 and 197 passengers in 2013-14); all of them Condor Airlines passengers who enplaned in October.
- Highway border crossings (personal vehicle passengers) were down by 2 percent overall between 2012-13 and 2013-14. Declines at Alcan (-4 percent) and Haines (-9 percent) were slightly offset by an increase at Skagway (+6 percent).
- Non-resident ridership on the Alaska Marine Highway System was down by 17 percent in 2013-14, following an 11 percent increase the previous fall/winter season. According to the AMHS, the decline in 2013-14 is due to a reduced number of sailings to/from the southern ports of Bellingham and Prince Rupert during this time frame. These figures reflect all non-residents riding the Alaska Marine Highway System over the fall/winter season, including those who exited the state via ferry.
- Bed tax revenues showed little change in Anchorage (-1 percent) and Juneau (flat). Fairbanks revenues were up by 20 percent, due to the Arctic Winter Games, increased international flights, and the Alaska Federation of Natives convention, according to the Fairbanks Convention and Visitor Bureau. Sitka revenues also increased, by 7 percent. (Bed tax revenues reflect both resident and non-resident activity, as well as price fluctuations.)
- Anchorage vehicle tax revenues were down by 2 percent since the previous fall/winter, while RV rental revenues were up by 4 percent.
- Visit Anchorage reported a decline of 11 percent in convention/meeting attendance, and the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau reported an 8 percent increase (a preliminary estimate).

**TABLE 2. Fall/Winter Visitor Industry Indicators  
2012-13 to 2013-14**

	2012-13	2013-14	% change
<b>Domestic Air Passenger Exits</b>			
Anchorage	577,990	603,269	+4%
Fairbanks	91,003	92,691	+2
Juneau	48,813	49,848	+2
Ketchikan	22,194	23,074	+4
Sitka	11,188	11,362	+2
Other	8,604	9,050	+5
<b>Total</b>	<b>759,792</b>	<b>789,294</b>	<b>+4%</b>
<b>International Air Passenger Exits</b>			
Anchorage	290	197	-32%
Fairbanks	3,555	4,538	+28
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,845</b>	<b>4,735</b>	<b>+23%</b>
<b>Highway Border Crossings (Personal Vehicle Occupants)</b>			
Alcan Hwy	13,155	12,581	-4%
Klondike Hwy	11,530	12,181	+6
Haines Hwy	6,821	6,209	-9
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,506</b>	<b>30,97</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b>Ferry Non-Resident Ridership</b>			
Total passengers	14,300	11,817	-17%
<b>Bed Tax Revenues</b>			
Anchorage	\$7,317,674	\$7,276,895	-1%
Fairbanks <sup>1</sup>	\$1,272,852	\$1,521,460	+20
Juneau	\$366,297	\$365,049	-<1
Sitka	\$58,708	\$62,792	+7
<b>Anchorage Vehicle Tax Revenues</b>			
Vehicles	\$1,091,354	\$1,065,416	-2%
RVs	\$13,504	\$14,091	+4
<b>Convention Attendance</b>			
Anchorage	73,907	65,733	-11%
Fairbanks <sup>2</sup>	9,831	10,601	+8

Sources: Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, Fairbanks International Airport, Alaska Airlines, Yukon Department of Tourism and Culture, Alaska Marine Highway System, Municipality of Anchorage, Visit Anchorage, Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau, City and Borough of Juneau, and City and Borough of Sitka.

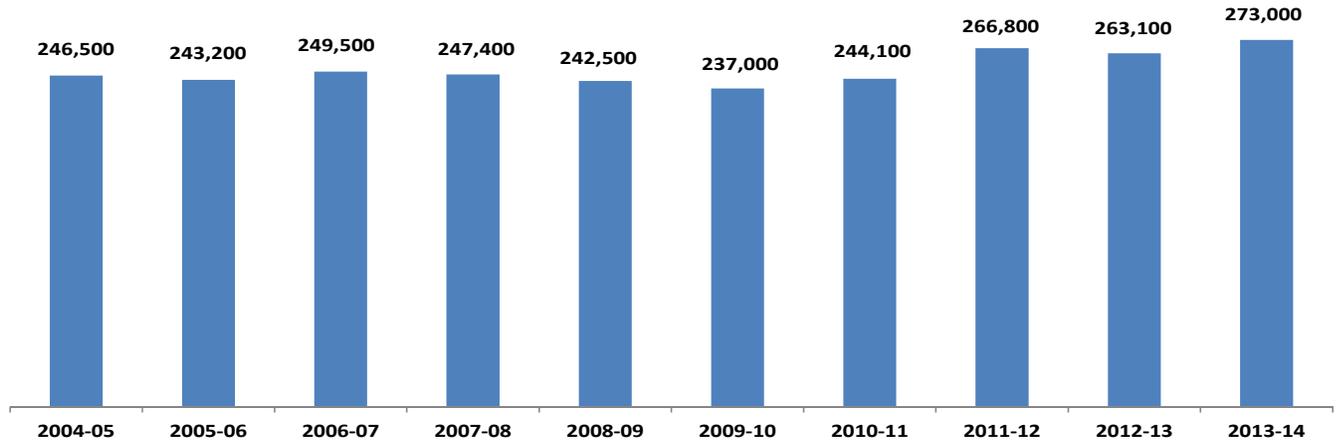
<sup>1</sup> Fairbanks bed tax figures represent combined totals of the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

<sup>2</sup> Fairbanks convention visitation numbers are preliminary.

## Visitor Volume Trends

As seen in the following chart, fall/winter volume changes very little over time, unlike summer visitor volume. The market is largely composed of business travelers and those visiting friends or relatives (VFRs), which are not as subject to market changes as the vacation/pleasure market. The growth in 2013-14 (4 percent) follows a slight decrease in 2012-13 (-1 percent).

**CHART 2. Visitor Volume, Fall/Winter 2004-05 to 2013-14**



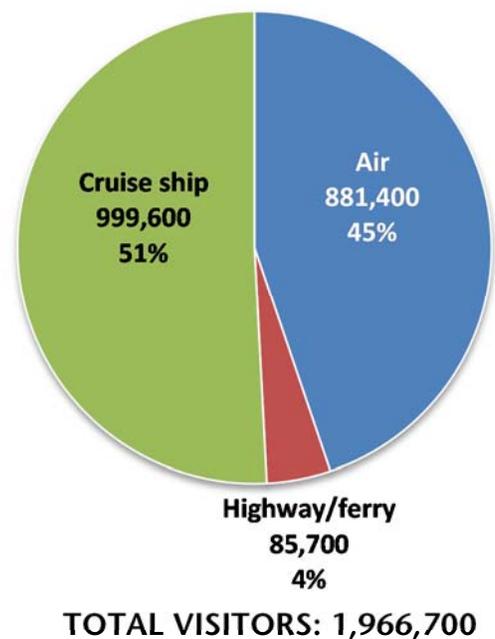
Sources: AVSP V and AVSP VI (conducted by McDowell Group).

## Full-Year Visitor Volume

Combining results of the Summer 2013 and Fall/Winter 2013-14 AVSP study periods, the volume of out-of-state visitors to Alaska for the 12-month period of May 2013 through April 2014 was 1,966,700. The summer market (1,693,700) represented 86 percent of the annual volume; the fall/winter market (273,000) represented 14 percent. The full-year volume of 2013-14 represents an increase of 6 percent over the previous 12-month period.

The chart at right shows the full-year volume by transportation market. The cruise ship volume of 999,600 includes all cruise ship visitors (regardless of entry/exit transportation mode). The air volume of 881,400 represents all visitors who entered and exited Alaska via air (excluding cruise ship passengers). The highway/ferry volume of 85,700 includes all visitors who entered or exited Alaska via highway or ferry.

**CHART 3. Alaska Visitor Volume, Full Year 2013-14, By Market**

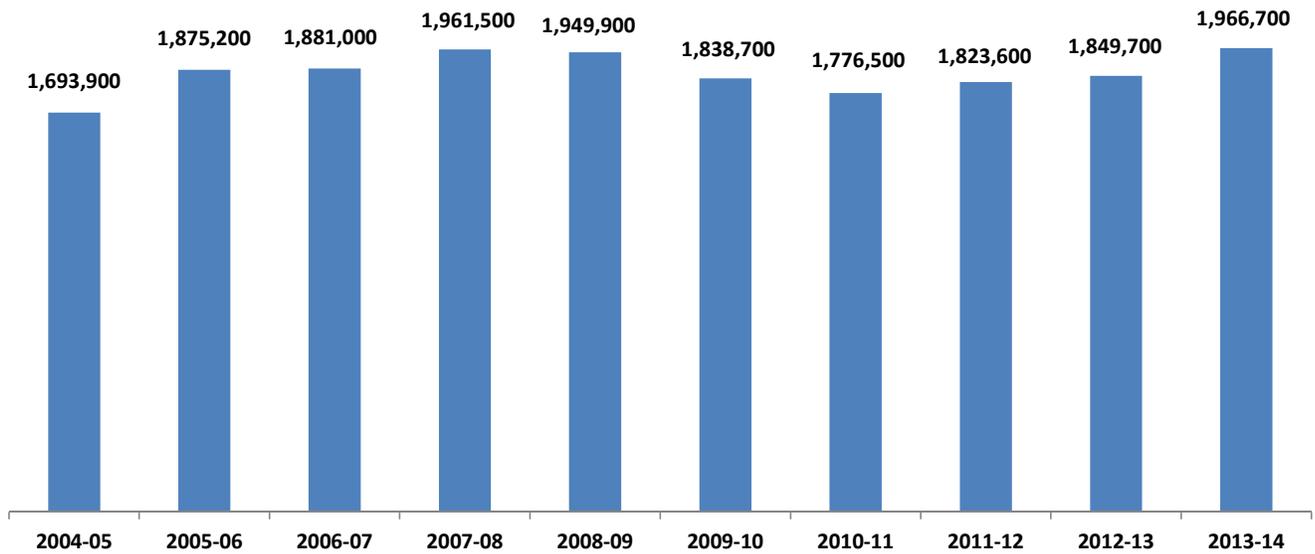


## Full-Year Visitor Volume Trends

The 2013-14 full-year visitation of 1,966,700 marks the largest number of visitors to the State of Alaska in history – beating the previous peak in 2007-08 (1,961,500) by over 5,000 visitors. It also marks the most significant growth (+6 percent) in a single year since 2005-06, and the third consecutive year of growth after the recession-era slump of 2008-09 to 2010-11. After the low point of 2010-11, volume grew by 3 percent in 2011-12, then by 1 percent in 2012-13.

Annual visitation volume is largely driven by the summer market, which represents 86 percent of full-year volume. Summer 2013 visitation was up by 7 percent from summer 2012.

**CHART 4. Full-Year Visitor Volume, 2004-05 to 2013-14**



Sources: AVSP V and AVSP VI (conducted by McDowell Group).

This report provides visitor volume estimates for Alaska between October 1, 2013 and April 30, 2014, as part of the *Alaska Visitor Statistics Program VI (AVSP)*, conducted by McDowell Group for the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (Division of Economic Development).

Visitor volume is estimated by exit mode; the methodology is slightly different for each mode.

**Domestic and International Air:** Outgoing traffic by month and by port was gathered from Alaska Airlines, Anchorage International Airport, and Fairbanks International Airport. Visitor/resident ratios were applied to monthly traffic, by port, to arrive at visitor volume estimates. Ratios were determined in the fall/winter 2011-12 AVSP survey fielding period, during which time 34,381 domestic flight passengers and 3,634 international flight passengers were tallied as they embarked on flights exiting Alaska. Tallies took place at airports in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka.

**Highway:** Border crossing data (the number of people exiting Alaska/entering Yukon) was provided by month and port by the Yukon Department of Tourism and Culture. Visitor/resident ratios were applied to seasonal (fall and winter) traffic, by port, to arrive at visitor volume estimates. The ratios were based on tallies conducted in AVSP V (2006-07) because no highway tallies were conducted for AVSP VI (2011-12).

**Ferry:** The Alaska Marine Highway System provided non-resident exiting traffic data by month and port (passengers disembarking at Bellingham and Prince Rupert).

This report also includes additional indicators of the 2013-14 visitor season and how they compare to 2012-13. Sources included:

- Bed tax revenues collected from Municipality of Anchorage, Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, City and Borough of Juneau, and City and Borough of Sitka.
- Vehicle rental tax revenues collected from Municipality of Anchorage.
- Anchorage convention attendance provided by Visit Anchorage.
- Fairbanks convention attendance provided by Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The AVSP VI study team would like to acknowledge the following entities for their assistance with the project.

Alaska Airlines  
Alaska Marine Highway System  
Alaska Travel Industry Association  
Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska  
Fairbanks International Airport  
Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
Yukon Department of Tourism and Culture

## Visitor/Resident Ratios

The following table shows the percentage of all travelers exiting the state by various transportation modes who are out-of-state visitors (rather than Alaska residents) in fall/winter 2013-14. For example, an estimated 32.7 percent of travelers who exited Alaska via Domestic Air were visitors. These ratios are a composite of ratios by location, by month. Because they apply to traffic data on a monthly and by-location basis, applying them to overall traffic will not yield the same results.

It is important to note that the highway ratio refers to highway travelers who are exiting the state for the final time on their trip. This eliminates the possibility of double-counting visitors who exit the state twice – for example, ferry passengers who exit the state at Beaver Creek, then re-enter at Haines to board a ferry.

**TABLE 3. Visitor Percentages, by Mode**

Exit Mode	Percentage Visitors
Domestic Air	32.7%
International Air	99.2%
Highway <sup>1</sup>	24.7%
Ferry	23.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.6%</b>

<sup>1</sup> The highway ratio refers to “last-exit” visitors: not planning to re-enter Alaska on the same trip.