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Press Release

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New Summer Visitor Data Report Released

(Juneau, AK) – An estimated 1.56 million out-of-state visitors traveled to Alaska between May and September 2011, spending just over \$1.5 billion on lodging, tours, retail, and other out-of-pocket purchases according to the newly released Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP) Summer 2011 report.

The study revealed a two percent increase in visitation between summer 2010 and 2011. "This turning point is especially welcomed by Alaska communities and businesses that experienced several consecutive years of decline," said Susan Bell, commissioner for the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED).

The report will be presented during a tourism marketing meeting on Tuesday, March 20, 2012, at 11:45 a.m. at the Westmark Baranof Hotel in Juneau. The presentation is open to the public and the media.

The AVSP research is a statewide program commissioned by DCCED to collect information from visitors about their Alaska experience, in-state spending, and trip-planning process. The current survey is the sixth in a series of research reports that began in the mid-1980s.

The response sample size was increased by 20 percent since the study was last conducted in 2006. The larger data set translates to extensive visitor detail in the report, including profiles for many small communities that have historically had limited access to visitor research.

Campground user and group traveler profiles are included in the report for the first time. Other high-interest market segments profiled in the report include sportfishing, adventure travelers, bed and breakfast users, participants in Native cultural tours and activities, repeat visitors, and cruise passengers that spend time in Alaska on their own.

The report also has unprecedented detail about visitors from Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, German-speaking Europe, and Switzerland. A special profile of international visitors will be released later this month.

The project team was led by McDowell Group, a research and consulting firm with offices in Anchorage and Juneau. Subcontractors Fusion MR and MR Data assisted with aspects of the research. The Alaska Travel Industry Association helped DCCED fund and oversee the project.

"The consumer information and market intelligence provided by AVSP is invaluable to the State of Alaska, local and regional destination marketers, and Alaska businesses," said Wanetta Ayers, director of the Division of Economic Development. "Insights from AVSP help the state refine and optimize our destination marketing program."

The AVSP report is available online at <http://commerce.alaska.gov/ded/dev/toubus/research.htm> along with information about other Division of Economic Development programs.

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