

News from Appalachian

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News Bureau
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North Carolina Ski Industry Contributes More Than \$170 Million to State's Economy

The North Carolina ski areas contributed \$172.5 million to the state's economy during the 1995-96 season, according to a report released today by Appalachian State University and the North Carolina Ski Areas Association.

North Carolina's 1995-96 ski season broke all-time records for attendance with more than 641,000 skier visits, surpassing the previous record of 606,000 skier visits set in 1987-88 according to Dr. Rick Kirkpatrick of Appalachian's Walker College of Business. Kirkpatrick, who conducted the study, presented the results at Appalachian Ski Mtn. to local officials and members of the ski industry.

Direct skier spending in North Carolina totaled \$96.4 million. "As that money circulates in the community, the estimated multiplier effect for western North Carolina results in additional spending of \$76.1 million for a total impact of \$172.5 million," Kirkpatrick said. "These results are particularly impressive since the spending is compressed within a 120-day period."

"All of the members of the North Carolina Ski Areas Association knew that the 1995-96 ski season was outstanding, but this report documents the magnitude," said Tony Waddell of Cataloochee Ski Area. "We are most pleased with the ski industry's contribution to the North Carolina economy."

Out-of-state skiers accounted for direct spending of \$61 million, or 63 percent of the total skier expenditures, up from 53 percent in the 1989-90 ski season. Of the 641,000 skier visits,

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approximately 302,000 were from North Carolina, 116,000 from Florida, 77,000 from Georgia, 58,000 from South Carolina and 39,000 from Tennessee, according to the report.

Skiing was a destination trip for most skiers, with 93 percent of all respondents indicating that their visit to the ski resort was the primary reason for the trip. In particular, North Carolinians took advantage of their proximity to the resorts and made frequent visits with 44 percent indicating that they would be skiing more than one time during the season.

Skiers spent an estimated \$22 million at the ski resorts, up from the \$8.8 million spent in the 1989-90 ski season. More than 58 percent of all skiers indicated their trip would include at least one night's stay, and that resulted in \$27.2 million in lodging expenditures. Other spending included \$13.7 million in retail shopping and \$22.7 million for food and entertainment. Skiers traveled an average of 286 miles each way to reach their skiing destination, resulting in \$8.5 million in transportation expenses.

Of the 641,000 skier visits, more than 517,000 were made in the High Country of North Carolina (ski resorts in Watauga and Avery counties), contributing a total impact of \$140 million to the area's economy. The remaining \$32.5 million was generated in the southwestern North Carolina mountains.

The study revealed that out of each dollar spent during a skier visit, 23 cents was spent at the ski resort, with the remaining 77 cents spent outside the resort. "Low inflation in ski ticket prices since the 1989-90 ski season and increased spending by out-of-state skiers in other areas, particularly food, entertainment and lodging, resulted in an increased share for businesses outside the resort," Kirkpatrick said.

"This report reinforces the fact that a good season is as important to the local business

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community as it is to the ski resorts,” Grady Moretz of Appalachian Ski Mtn. said. “It is extremely important that the mountain tourism and business community work together in promoting North Carolina skiing.”

The survey also showed that more than 51 percent of skiers considered themselves of high intermediate or advanced skiing ability. The typical skier had six years of skiing experience. “The strength of future growth in North Carolina skiing is reflected in the fact that 42 percent of skiers brought with them to the slopes two other skiers with no experience,” Kirkpatrick said.

The quality of the skiing experience continued to be an important draw to North Carolina ski areas. Nearly 87 percent rated their experience as good or excellent, with 95 percent indicating plans to come back to one of the North Carolina ski areas this year.

“The findings in this report show that the quality of the skiing experience in North Carolina translates into a significant boost to the state’s economy,” said Gunther Jochl of Sugar Mountain. “With the early arrival of cold weather to the mountains of North Carolina, we look forward to another good year.”

The eight North Carolina ski areas, with full- and part-time employment totaling more than 1,400 employees, are Appalachian Ski Mtn. and Ski Hawksnest in Watauga County, Ski Beech and Sugar Mountain in Avery Country, Wolf Laurel Ski Resort in Madison County, Cataloochee Ski Area in Haywood County, Sapphire Valley Ski Area in Jackson County and Ski Scaly in Macon County.

For more information on the report, contact Dr. Rick Kirkpatrick, Walker College of Business, Appalachian State University, (704) 262-2922, or Brad Moretz, Appalachian Ski Mtn. Inc., (704) 295-7828.

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Total Estimated Direct Skier Expenditures in North Carolina by North Carolina and Out of State Residents and by Type, 1995-96 Ski Season

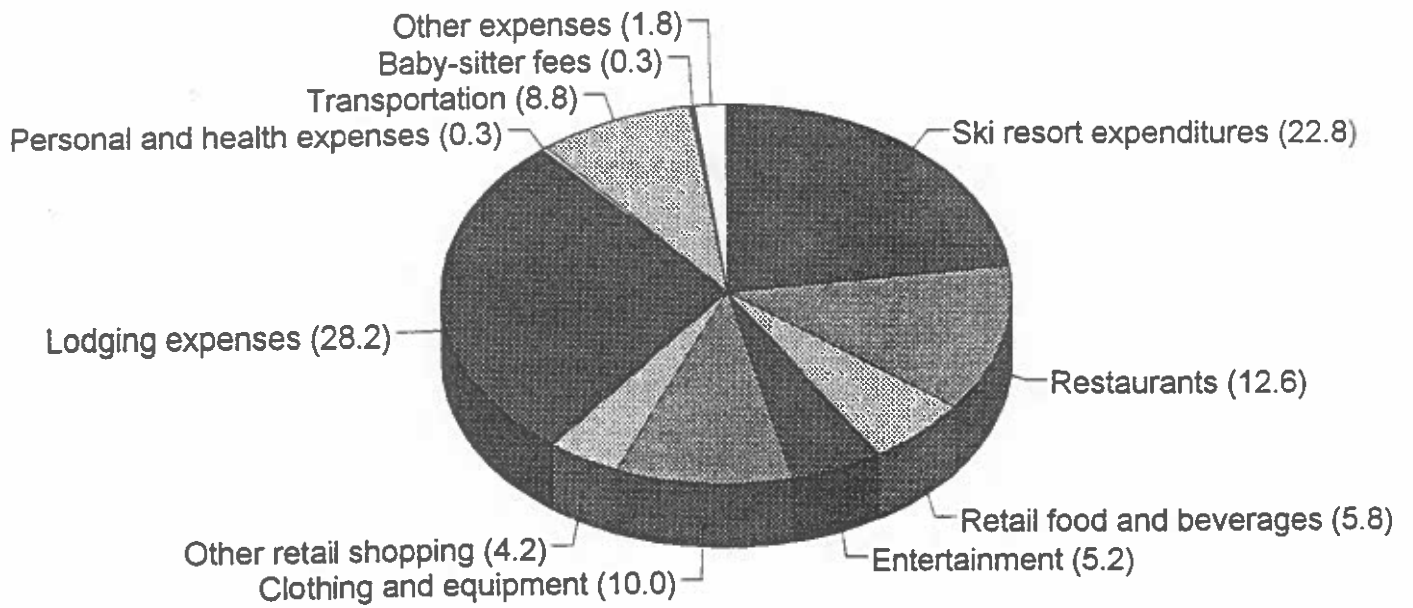
Type of Expenditure	North Carolina Resident		Out of State Residents		Total Expenditure
	Within 25 miles of Ski Area	Within NC	Within 25 miles of Ski Area	Within NC	
Ski resort expenditures	10,350,806		11,672,185		22,022,991
Restaurants	4,226,578	359,144	7,127,570	405,052	12,118,344
Food and beverages in retail stores	1,736,278	270,400	3,077,427	460,669	5,544,774
Entertainment	1,982,796	0	2,704,969	360,520	5,048,285
Clothing and equipment	2,352,505	843,452	5,021,247	1,442,566	9,659,770
Other retail shopping	1,164,067	73,231	2,503,087	274,276	4,014,661
Lodging expenses	9,099,518	223,781	17,420,388	462,755	27,206,442
Personal and health expenses	87,444	11,863	176,483	22,180	297,970
Transportation	2,226,929	432,153	4,486,128	1,356,288	8,501,498
Baby-sitter fees	31,525	0	259,212	0	290,737
Other expenses	320,211	114,860	1,018,901	233,060	1,687,032
Total	33,578,657	2,328,884	55,467,597	5,017,366	96,392,504

**Total Estimated Direct Skier Expenditures in North Carolina's High Country
1995-96 Ski Season***

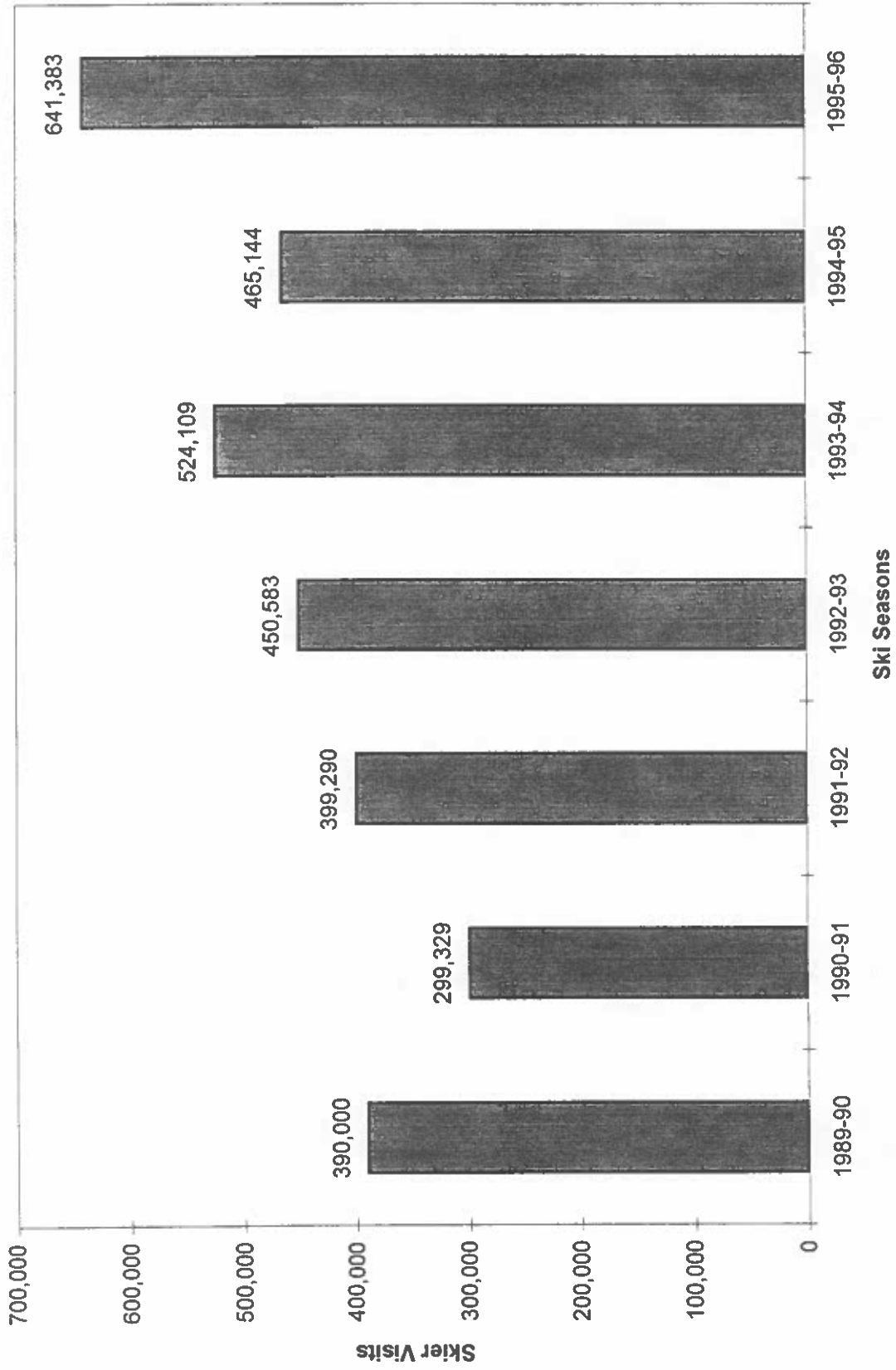
Type of Expenditure	Within 25 miles of Ski Area	Within NC	Total Expenditure
Ski resort expenditures	19,002,689		19,002,689
Restaurants	9,127,393	623,181	9,750,574
Food & beverages in retail stores	3,913,060	656,372	4,569,432
Entertainment	3,824,409	311,683	4,136,092
Clothing and equipment	4,953,768	1,930,121	6,883,889
Other retail shopping	2,588,937	281,095	2,870,032
Lodging expenses	21,627,274	560,744	22,188,018
Personal and health expenses	224,862	29,543	254,405
Transportation	5,369,191	1,448,037	6,817,228
Baby-sitter fees	264,680	0	264,680
Other expenses	1,238,541	314,282	1,552,823
	72,134,804	6,155,058	78,289,862

*Ski areas in Avery and Watauga counties only.

Distribution of a \$1 Expenditure Made by Skiers, in Cents



Skier Visits to North Carolina Resorts 1989-90 through 1995-96



Employment by North Carolina Ski Resorts
1990-1991 through 1995-96

