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Economic Impact of the 2017 New River Marathon

The New River Marathon (NRM) event includes a marathon, a half marathon, a 5K and a 1 mile fun run. The start and finish is along the banks of the historic New River in Boone, NC, one of only 14 American Heritage Rivers in the United States. The 2017 New River Marathon was held in May.

Following the 2017 event an online survey was administered to participants using Survey Monkey©. Email invitations were sent to 515 runners who had registered for the 2017 NRM. After the initial email invitation was sent on May 20 and a reminder on May 27, 310 responses were received and 172 runners completed the survey. The completed response rate was 33%.

Of those who participated (n=515), 43% percent were extremely satisfied with the NRM and another 34% were moderately satisfied. Sixty-one percent of the respondents traveled to the High Country and stayed overnight. Of these, 54% stayed one night and 37% stayed two nights. Sixty-five percent of overnight stays were in a hotel, 12% were in a rental house and 8% were at a campsite.

Considering those respondents who participated in 2017 and traveled from their homes to the area, average total spending was \$330 during their stay. The top two categories for expenditures were lodging and restaurant meals. Average lodging expenditures were \$124 and average spending at restaurants was \$79.

Summing this over the total number of non-local participants in 2017 (n=315) yields total direct spending of \$104 thousand associated with the NRM event. Direct spending circulates through the regional economy and generates additional spending through the “multiplier effect.” Applying a RIMS II multiplier of 1.48 for the tourism sector yields a total economic impact of \$154 thousand.

This is a project of the App State Student Chapter of the National Association for Business Economics. Yeimi Chavez-Gonzalez and Francis Zamora Muñoz were the lead analysts for this report. Contact: John Whitehead, Professor of Economics, (828)262-6121 or whiteheadjc@appstate.edu.