



**ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY OF ECLIPSE
TOURISM IN CAPE GIRARDEAU COUNTY, MO**



**SOUTHEAST MISSOURI
STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873**

Economic and Business Engagement Center

2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary report presents the findings of an economic impact analysis on the 2017 Solar Eclipse on Cape Girardeau County, Missouri. The study was conducted and executed by Southeast Missouri State University's Economic and Business Engagement Center to estimate the overall economic impact of expenditures by eclipse tourists in the Cape Girardeau area. **Overall, estimates suggested that the total solar eclipse had a modest positive benefit on expenditures in the local economy.**

Key findings from the research include the following:

- Average number of people in travel party = **3.36 people**
- Average length of stay = **1.84 days**
- Average total expenditures = **\$101.55 per person**
- Estimated value in new production = **\$572,015**
- Estimated value in labor income = **\$184,600**



METHODOLOGY

Data for this study was obtained from on-site surveys collected from Friday, August 18 through the day of the eclipse on Monday, August 21, 2017. Survey participants voluntarily elected to complete the 10-question survey (*Appendix A*) in a convenience sampling approach with ballot-boxes at various locations including Cape Girardeau hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and downtown businesses. Research staff also approached spectators and collected surveys at the Southeast Missouri State University River Campus and Cape Girardeau Sportsplex, the two largest organized public events for visitors.

Definition of eclipse tourist:

1. Resides outside of Cape Girardeau county (*Answered with a non-Cape County zip code on Q1 of survey*)
2. Visited Cape Girardeau specifically for the purpose of witnessing the eclipse (*Answered "No" on Q4 of survey*)

Out of the 476 survey respondents, 328 (or 68.9%) met the definition of an eclipse tourist.

Estimates for the total number eclipse tourists:

According to news releases by the local media, the attendance estimates at the River Campus and Sportsplex totaled 4,000 spectators. In addition, 7,000 spectators were reported at Houck Stadium, but most in attendance were K-12 and University students. The total number of spectators at these 3 locations (11,000) was used as an estimate for the area's potential capacity to accommodate eclipse tourists.

Using the proportion above of 68.9%, it was estimated that the total number of eclipse tourists totaled at least 2,756 individuals.

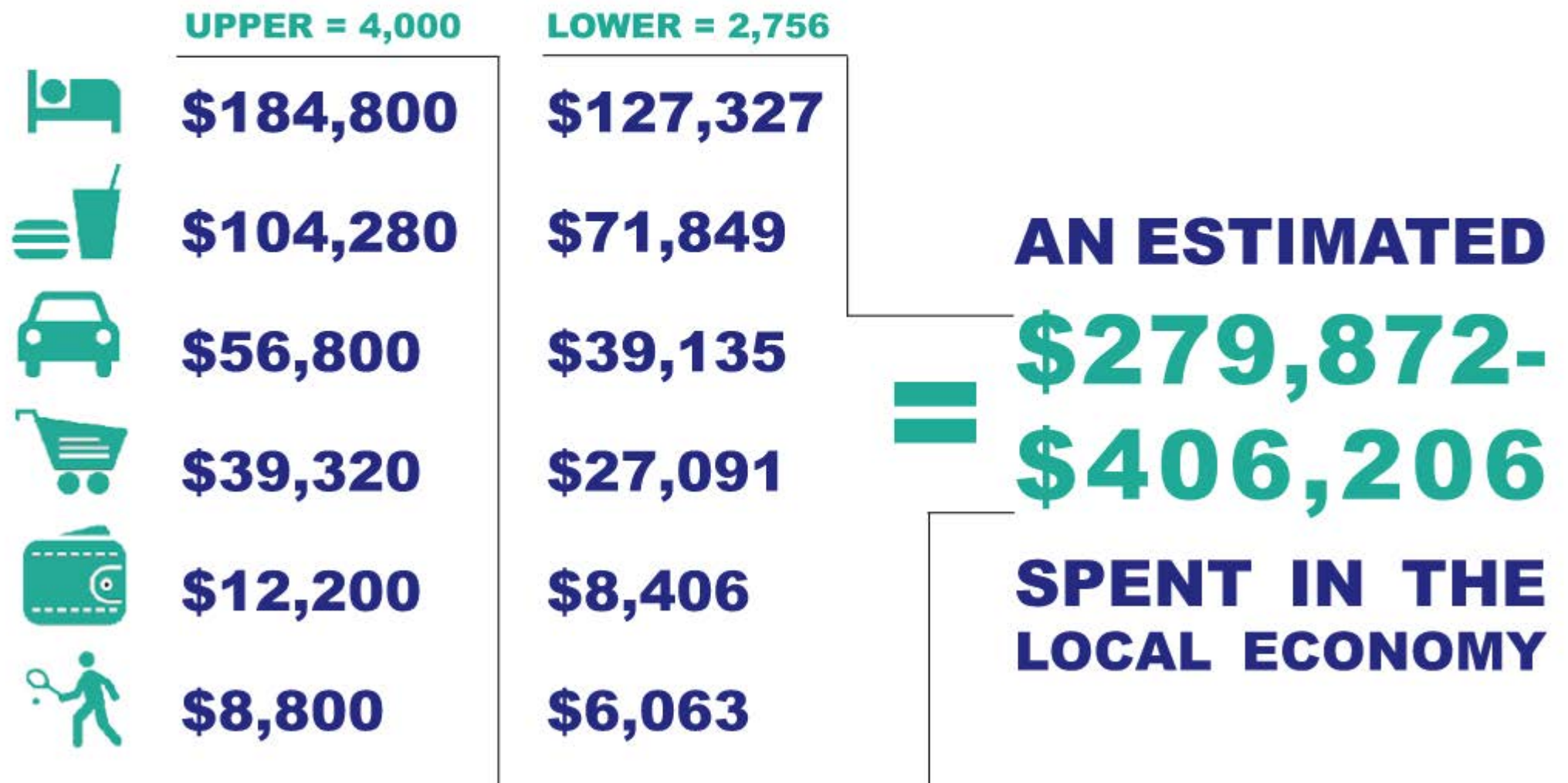
Estimates for the overall economic impact:

1. Direct effect — all increases in the market value of production, total employment, and labor income attributed only to tourists
2. Indirect effect — any increases in economic activity experienced by input suppliers of businesses that did business with tourists
3. Induced effect — the value of any increases in consumer spending caused by tourist expenditures

Estimates were calculated using the IMPLAN input-output model which estimates the changes in spending or jobs on a local economy by considering the interconnectedness of different sectors. The model is designed to account for the indirect and induced effects that follow an initial direct effect.

RESULTS

The primary focus of the impact analysis is centered on the spending behavior of eclipse tourists who reside outside of Cape Girardeau county and survey results can be seen in the Appendix on pages 5 and 6. **On average, eclipse tourists traveled in parties with 3.36 people and stayed in Cape Girardeau for 1.84 days between Friday, August 18 and Monday, August 21. For each person in a traveling party, eclipse tourists spent an average of \$101.55 in the local economy (or \$406.20 for a party of four).** In comparison, those respondents who were visiting for another reason were in Cape Girardeau for a longer length of stay and had larger traveling parties. Estimates for expenditures by category were calculated using the survey results and a conservative range of 2,756 to 4,000 eclipse tourists.



CONCLUSION

Overall, estimates suggested that the 2017 solar eclipse had a modest positive benefit on expenditures in the local economy. **The impact estimates suggest that a one-day event, such as a total solar eclipse, can produce a non-negligible uptick in local spending.**

EFFECT ON EMPLOYMENT



4.7 - 6.8 NEW JOBS

OVERALL EFFECT OF TOURIST EXPENDITURES

\$572,015 IN NEW PRODUCTION

\$184,600 IN LABOR INCOME

While the estimates provide a range of expectations for the 2024 Eclipse, they are not without limitations. For example, estimates for the proportion of out-of-town visitors in Cape Girardeau were based on a small sample of at each of the community viewing locations. Likewise, figures for the city's potential capacity to accommodate tourists were based on attendance estimates at three large public gatherings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2024

- 1. Explore event options during the weekend and right after eclipse to encourage longer stays and increases in total expenditures from tourists.** Ex: Speakers, concerts, historic tours, and other tourist attractions that could be coupled with eclipse
- 2. Encourage businesses to open extended hours during the weekend and on the day of the eclipse, Monday, April 8, 2024.**
Ex: Many businesses were closed for the 2017 Eclipse because it was a Monday
- 3. Explore community-wide eclipse branding with promotion beginning at least 1 year in advance to ensure maximum impact.**
- 4. Explore hotel, restaurant, and other relevant businesses “packages” for eclipse tourists to generate additional economic activity.** Ex: 2 night hotel stay, dining credit at local restaurant(s), and 2 tickets to an eclipse-related event (*See Recommendation #1*)
- 5. Don't “scare” locals into staying home during the weekend and day of out of fear of the city being too congested.** Ex: City of Carbondale stated news media and outlets overhyped the event and sales from local customers decreased during that time period.

APPENDIX

A. 10-Question Survey

1. What is the zip code of your current residence? _____
2. Including yourself, how many people are in your party observing the total solar eclipse at this event?
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 or more
3. On what days have/will you be present in Cape Girardeau, MO or its surrounding area? Check all that apply.
 Saturday, August 19th Sunday, August 20th Monday, August 21st Tuesday, August 22nd
4. Would you have come to the Cape Girardeau area today even if the total solar eclipse had not occurred? If yes, for what reason?
 Yes No
5. During your stay in the Cape Girardeau area, how much money did/will you spend on each category (described below) to watch the total solar eclipse?
 Please round responses to the nearest \$5 (i.e. \$15, \$20, \$35):
 Food and drink (restaurants, bars, clubs, concessions, etc.) \$ _____
6. Lodging (hotel, motel, camping, etc.) \$ _____
7. Transportation (gasoline, rental transportation, taxi services, etc.) \$ _____
8. Retail stores (department stores, grocery stores, etc.) \$ _____
9. Recreation and other entertainment (movie theatres, museums, sports, golfing, etc.) \$ _____
10. Any other expenses \$ _____

B. Sample Averages From Surveys

	Eclipse Tourists	Non-Tourist Visitors	Local Residents
Number of People in Travel Party	3.36 people	3.44 people	4.07 people
Length of Stay	1.84 days	2.74 days	3.32 days
Food & Drink (Per Person)	\$26.07	\$36.99	\$7.89
Lodging (Per Person)	\$46.20	\$27.78	\$4.97
Transportation (Per Person)	\$14.20	\$22.78	\$5.15
Retail Store (Per Person)	\$9.83	\$11.94	\$8.52
Recreation (Per Person)	\$2.20	\$4.44	\$2.93
Other (Per Person)	\$3.05	\$10.92	\$5.07
Total Expenditures (Per Person)	\$101.55	\$114.85	\$34.53
Sample Size	328	86	62

APPENDIX CONTINUED

C. Estimates for Tourist Expenditures by Category

	N = 2,756	N = 4,000
Food & Drink	\$71,849	\$104,280
Lodging	\$127,327	\$184,800
Transportation	\$39,135	\$56,800
Retail Store	\$27,091	\$39,320
Recreation	\$6,063	\$8,800
Other	\$8,406	\$12,200
Total Expenditures	\$279,872	\$406,200

D. Economic Impact of Eclipse Tourism in Cape Girardeau County, MO (N=2,756)

	Income	Employment	Output
Direct	\$80,157	3.5	\$255,786
Indirect	\$24,775	0.6	\$69,049
Induced	\$22,290	0.6	\$68,282
Total Impact	\$127,240	4.7	\$394,118

E. Economic Impact of Eclipse Tourism in Cape Girardeau County, MO (N=4,000)

	Income	Employment	Output
Direct	\$116,364	5.1	\$371,243
Indirect	\$35,958	0.9	\$100,217
Induced	\$32,352	0.8	\$100,555
Total Impact	\$184,674	6.8	\$572,015



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PREPARED BY:

**DAVID YASKEWICH, PH.D. OF THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RESEARCH
ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT CENTER STAFF**