THE IN-FISHERMAN
WALLEYE TOURNAMENT:

A STUDY OF ECONOMIC IMPACTS IN
PIERCE COUNTY, WISCONSIN AND THE
SURROUNDING LAKE PEPIN REGION

Extension Working Paper 03-3
November, 2003

Ed Hass, Peter Herreid, and Dave Marcouiller

Collaborative applied research conducted in cooperation with
Pierce County Economic Development Corporation and the
Pierce County Partners in Tourism, Incorporated
The In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament:
A study of economic impacts in Pierce County, Wisconsin
and the Lake Pepin Region*

University of Wisconsin - Madison/Extension
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Center for Community Economic Development

Ed Hass, Professor and Community Resource Development Educator
UW-Extension /Pierce County
412 W. Kinne St.
Ellsworth, WI 54017
Telephone (715) 273-3531 Ext. 6663

Peter Herreid, Graduate Student
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
University of Wisconsin - Madison/Extension
106 Old Music Hall, 925 Bascom Mall
Madison, WI 53706
Telephone: (608) 262-2998

Dave Marcouiller, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
University of Wisconsin - Madison/Extension
106 Old Music Hall, 925 Bascom Mall
Madison, WI 53706
Telephone: (608) 262-2998

Extension Report 03-3

* This applied research was conducted as part of outreach education in the Community, Natural Resources, and Economic Development Programming Area. Authors are listed in alphabetical order with shared lead authorship.
Acknowledgements

This research project was made possible through the generous contributions of volunteer time and financial assistance from the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation (Janet Olson, Executive Director), the Pierce County Partners in Tourism, Inc. (Susan Amann, Tourism Coordinator), and community volunteers. An ad hoc survey design committee spent considerable time with the assistance of UW-Extension Specialist Dave Marcouiller to design a survey instrument, which would effectively gather the research data, needed to perform the economic analysis. A group of dedicated volunteers worked diligently to conduct the survey over a three-day period to gather the data from participants. We regret if we inadvertently missed anyone, and maintain full responsibility for any errors, omissions or misinterpretations in the report.

We particularly would like to acknowledge and thank Kay Beder for her leadership in coordinating numerous local activities and logistics to make the event a success. In addition many community supporters and volunteers from the Bay City area helped with numerous tasks to make the event successful. We also wish to thank Jim Kalkofen, Executive Director of the In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Trail, and all of the staff that provided assistance and help in conducting the survey research. Finally, we wish to thank the professional anglers, amateur anglers, and spectators for their cooperation in collecting the data for the research project.

Any event of this size and scope requires help and support from many groups and individuals in the area as well as financial sponsors for the event. We would like to thank the following groups and organizations for help and support to make the fishing tournament a success:

- Village of Bay City
- Bay City Fire Department
- Bay City Community Enhancement Group
- Bay City Bombers Ball Team
- Pierce-Pepin Cooperative Services (sponsor and volunteers)
- Dairyland Power Cooperative
- Xcel Energy
- Our apologies for any other groups we may have missed.

Finally, this project would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the following volunteer surveyors and members of the Survey Design Committee:

Susan Amann        Kay Beder
Tim Brabec         Steve Dzubay
Elissa Ernst       Rita Goveronski
Harold Herrn       Abby Jensen
Linda Keefe        Cindy Kern
Julie Klecker      Robin Kruse (lead)
Steve Messick      Mary Meier
Jim Munson         Janet Olson
Trudy Popenhagen   Don Pozniak
Jim Richman        Loretta Richman
Kyle Weaver        Ashley Wolf
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Executive Summary

Local officials and community leaders in Bay City, Wisconsin (Pierce County) graciously offered to host the In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament on June 11-13, 2003. Located in the Lake Pepin Region along the Mississippi River, the community offers a prime setting for the event, which is conducted at several pristine locations each year as part of the annual professional fishing tournament.

As plans were being formulated for the event, which would attract professional anglers, amateur anglers and spectators, it was suggested by the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation Board that an economic impact study be conducted to determine the effect on the local economy. To formulate the proper method for data collection and analysis, University Extension Specialists were contacted for assistance in design and implementation of the research project. Due to the nature of the event involving visitor attractions, tourism development and community participation, Pierce County Partners in Tourism, Inc. became very involved in the project.

The fishing contest is one of a series conducted each summer at various locations in the upper Midwest, which attracts professional anglers who are matched up with amateur anglers during the 3-day event. Spectators are drawn to the event to see the fishing results and the fishing equipment and promotional information presented by event sponsors.

The fishing tournament would bring new money into the area as participants travel to the event and make purchases for a variety of products and services during the event. Therefore a survey instrument was designed to gather data from a random sample of participants, which could then be used to estimate the total impact on the local economy.

Results of the survey suggested that trip spending for overnight accommodations, groceries, restaurants, automobile, fishing equipment, and entertainment expenses differed by group type. For instance, professional anglers, on average, spent roughly $1,200 on their trip to the event with just over $425 of this spent in Pierce County. Amateur anglers spent about $430 with about $155 spent in Pierce County. Finally, non-local spectators spent an average of just under $200 on their trip with about $70 being spent in Pierce County. When expanded by group size, results suggested that roughly $156,000 was spent in Pierce County as a result of this event.

Average daily expenditures from the survey of In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament attendees were used as the basis for estimating economic impacts of the event for Pierce County. When total non-local spending was applied to the impact model, results suggest that the overall impact of the event resulted in just over $100,000 in increased local income that supported roughly 5 local jobs. Given the export-base framework of this study, the estimate does not include the expenditure impact of spectators and
participants who were locals (from Pierce County). Thus, the economic impact estimates rely solely on “new” dollars flowing into the region from outside.

The In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament acted to stimulate the community’s retail and service sectors with multiplier effects felt in other local business. We estimate that the direct spending of non-local visitors created additional economic activity with an estimated total economic impact on Pierce County of roughly $190,000 in total output.

Limitations exist with this analysis and include survey-based assumptions regarding expenditure patterns, accuracy of projected attendance, ability of the current business structure to accommodate increased numbers of visitors, and general assumptions of input-output analysis. There is, however, ample reason to believe that positive economic impacts have been witnessed in the local economy as a result of the In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament. Weighing these positive impacts with traditional cost-benefit project analysis and inherent underlying political and social implications are necessary to fully address the impact of this tourism event.
The In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament:
A study of economic impacts in Pierce County, Wisconsin
and the surrounding Lake Pepin Region

Introduction and overview of the event

On June 11-13, 2003, the In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Tournament (IFWT) was held in Bay City, Wisconsin. The IFWT is an annual professional fishing tournament conducted each summer at several locations in the upper Midwest where professional anglers compete for cash and fishing equipment from major sponsors. Amateur anglers are teamed with professionals during the 3-day event to attempt to catch walleyes which cumulatively weigh the most.

Pierce County has a modest regional economy consisting of primarily agriculture, agri-business, limited manufacturing, and small retail establishments. A large component of the workforce commutes into Minnesota on a daily basis for jobs in manufacturing, assembly, and professional positions. The tourism component encompasses a variety of major attractions including the Mississippi River, The Great River Road, the Wild and Scenic St. Croix River, and Crystal Cave combined with numerous tourism retail establishments. It has a rich history associated with the major river systems which were the foundation for early development and expansion in the county. Fishing has been an important commercial and recreational activity. The In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament provides an interesting example of how tourism contributes to economic development as community leaders look for strategies to stimulate the local economy through approaches to add economic value to the scenic and productive natural resources of the area.

In December 2002 the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation Board discussed conducting an economic impact study of the tournament and requested assistance from Ed Hass, the Pierce County UW-Extension Community Resource Development Educator. The purpose of the study was to provide a better understanding of the local economy and to more fully explain the economic impacts of a fairly large-scale tourism event in Pierce County. As such, it can assist with educational programs and marketing efforts for future tourism development initiatives.

The intent of this report is to profile the non-local IFWT attendee and describe the economic impacts associated with the event on the local economy of Pierce County. Specifically, our interests focus on estimating the amount of NEW money brought into Pierce County by people from the outside and the impacts that this new money will have on generating business activity within the county.
The report is organized into four sections. Following this introduction, the second section outlines methods used in developing our understanding of the IFWT. The third section describes various results of the survey and resulting impact analysis. Finally, we conclude with a summary of the study and offer insights into possible implications of the results.

**Methods used to survey attendees and estimate economic impact**

Much of the insight we provide is the result of a random sample of IFWT attendees conducted during the 3 day event. In addition, we used survey results as a driver of the input-output impact model constructed using MicroIMPLAN. This section provides detail of the methods used in this project.

**Survey of IFWT attendees**

An event like a professional fishing contest of this nature had not been held in recent memory in Pierce County so there was no data available for use in describing attendees or making economic projections of impact. In order to develop a meaningful assessment of the event it would be necessary to collect data directly from event attendees and match these survey results with additional secondary data.

In designing an approach to collect expenditure data it was necessary to understand the conceptual framework of the event and then design a process to collect data in an objective random fashion that could be expanded to estimate the impact of the entire event. The approach included forming a local ad hoc survey design committee to work with event organizers and the authors to interactively discuss the design elements for the survey instrument.

Due to distances between Pierce County and Madison, a series of teleconferences were conducted to discuss the logistics involved in the fishing tournament and establish a strategy to achieve a random sampling process. During the teleconferences the strategy was formulated and through several iterations the final survey instrument was refined.

The tournament was organized to include 130 professional anglers who would be linked up with 130 amateur anglers who would compete in the contest as daily teams. The event involved a 3-day contest so each day professionals would be teamed up with different amateurs to offer the opportunity for amateurs to learn fishing techniques from three different professionals. Through a random process, a sample of thirty (30) professionals and thirty (30) amateurs were selected to complete the survey. Since the anglers would leave early each morning and fish steadily all day until the weigh-in period it was decided to survey the professional and amateur anglers as part of an orientation program the evening prior to the start of the tournament.

Tournament organizers estimated that potentially 1,000 spectators could come to the event to see the daily fish weigh-in and associated event activities. A goal was set to
collect 100 spectator surveys each day giving a total of 300 during the tournament. The window of opportunity to collect spectator surveys would be between 2:00 - 6:00 p.m. each day as they come to see each of the 130 fishing teams bring in their catch for the official weigh-in each day.

All of the event activities were located in the Bay City park and campground which is located on Lake Pepin and has access through a single street. Since parking was only available outside of the area spectators would need to walk into the event site making it relatively easy for surveyors to collect survey information. In order to provide for random sampling, surveyors were asked to select participants across a wide demographic range including age, sex, single/family, etc.

Considerable time and effort was devoted to designing the surveys; final versions of which are found in Appendix A. Our intent with the survey was to gather data in a manner that allowed us to estimate total non-local expenditure patterns that reflect new money coming into Pierce County. Given the missions of sponsoring organizations (focus on economic stimulus to create increased job and economic opportunities in the county by attracting money from outside of Pierce County into the local economy), several additional questions were added to elicit marketing information from the attendees for future tourism development planning.

The fishing tournament was held on Lake Pepin, which is an area of the Mississippi River about four to five miles wide and twenty-two miles long that borders the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin. In order for survey participants to conceptualize the Lake Pepin region, including parts of both states it was necessary to provide a map depicting the region for use in completing the survey. This map is found in Appendix B.

Once general agreement on survey content was attained, the instrument was pre-tested with local volunteers to test the language design and interpretation. Based on input from the pre-test, the survey instrument was modified for flow and understanding.

In order to determine attendance at the event an individual with a counter was positioned on the street at the entrance to the Bay City campground to count the number of individuals attending the event. This provided for an accurate tally of the total attendance recorded at half-hour interval counts.

The survey was administered to attendees using a face-to-face interview process. Surveyors would ask respondents specific expenditure questions based on spending categories and record their responses on the survey instrument. This process provided more consistency in response because it allowed for clarification of questions associated with spending patterns of the individual responding to the survey.

**Estimating the economic impact of the IFWT**
As part of the survey procedure, we were able to pre-screen attendees by place of
origin. This was done to focus on spending activities of the non-local visitor. The economic impact assessment was done using an export base approach that focused on NEW dollars flowing into the community from the outside. Non-local expenditure patterns were estimated and applied to an estimate of visitation levels to develop a total amount of new spending that acted as a stimulus to drive economic impacts.

Visitor expenditures and economic impact are two separate issues. The In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament drew people into Pierce County from outside. Expenditures by these people while they were in Pierce County contributed to the total receipts of firms, which operate in and around Pierce County. With increased receipts, these firms then react by creating jobs, meeting a payroll, paying local taxes and making their business more profitable. This leads to an economic impact, namely through the creation and distribution of jobs and income.

The primary focus in economic impact analysis is identifying how income is generated from new dollars flowing into the community from some stimulus. Economic impact describes the consequences of these new dollars by estimating the extent to which local businesses react to increased demand. These new dollars are used to maintain and expand business offerings of local businesses.

The economic impact assessment was conducted with the use of a regional economic model of Pierce County. The model, developed for this project using Micro-IMPLAN software and county-level data for the base year 2000, is a standard input-output model of the county. At the heart of the In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament impact model is a transaction table for Pierce County. This table tracks the flow of all goods and services produced by industries in the region. By identifying receipts to industry groupings from non-local visitors, impacts of the IFWT on the regional economy can be assessed.\(^1\)

The analysis captures direct impacts, as identified in the expenditure section above, plus indirect and induced impacts. Some refer to direct and induced impacts as the “multiplier” impact. Local firms impacted through visitor spending, purchase goods and services to provide their product. These are often referred to as intermediate purchased inputs. Examples of these may include the purchase of furniture by a local motel, food purchases of a local restaurant, artwork and screening for articles of clothing, or wholesale purchases of t-shirts by a local merchant for resale. These purchases are important in transmitting dollars to other local firms and feed into what is termed the indirect economic impact.

Expenditures also filter into the economy through increased consumption by residents in Pierce County as a result of increases in household incomes. These increases occur due to the jobs created, both directly and indirectly, by the IFWT. This is referred to as

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\(^1\) Details of input-output modeling can be obtained from a companion report published by the University of Wisconsin-Extension (see Deller, Sumathi, and Marcouiller 1993) or the recently completed textbook on community economics (Shaffer, Deller and Marcouiller 2003).
the induced economic impact.

Following construction of the Pierce County input-output model, impact assessments were made. Several economic characteristics are relevant when assessing economic impacts. These often focus on income and employment effects. For our purposes, we present results for the event’s impact on total gross regional product (output), income as measured in total value added (including employee compensation, proprietor’s income, other property-type income, and indirect business taxes), and employment (measured in number of jobs).

Specifically, total non-local expenditures were associated with specific economic sectors. For instance, expenditures on restaurants and bars were associated with eating and drinking establishments. All expenditures were constrained by the level, or supply, of existing business activity in Pierce County. The results identified direct impacts from expenditures, as well as the multiplier effect caused by the linkages that exist between the industries and households in Pierce County.

Results

Results of the survey are reported based on the number of responses. The interview process yielded 169 spectator samples, 29 professional participants, and 27 amateur participants. Although several samples provided incomplete responses to certain parts of the survey, the face-to-face nature of the interview process provided full participation. Given the random selection process, we can expand their summary statistics to reflect a picture of attendee characteristics. Our independent approach is based on total population estimates of 130 professional participants, 130 amateur participants, and 1,134 non-local spectators.

Profile of non-local attendees
Survey results suggest that there were significant differences between attendee groups. A summary of IFWT attendee trip characteristics is provided in Table 1. Note from this table that professional participants spent the longest total trip time in the area with an average of 9 days and an equal number of nights. Amateur participants spent an average of almost 5 days and 4 nights. Non-local spectators, on average, spent slightly more than 2 days and roughly one night on the trip related to this event. Also, it is interesting to note that professional and amateur participants were most likely to be found in groups of 2 to 3 people with a maximum of 8 people while non-local spectators were typically found in groups of 1 or 2 persons with a maximum of three.

Table 1. Trip characteristics of IFWT attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Trip characteristic</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9
Spectators
Number of days spent on this trip 171 2.6 15 1
Number of nights spent on this trip 162 1.5 16 0
People in travel party 171 2.3 8 1

Professional participants
Number of days spent on this trip 28 9 20 4
Number of nights spent on this trip 27 8.9 20 3
People in travel party 29 2.2 8 1

Amateur participants
Number of days spent on this trip 26 4.6 16 1
Number of nights spent on this trip 26 3.9 15 0
People in travel party 27 1.4 3 1

In an analogous fashion, there was fairly dramatic difference in the amount of spending by IFWT attendee group. The individual per-trip spending habits of each group are shown in Table 2. It is important to note that this is specific to only non-local attendees. The survey instrument allowed us to differentiate total trip spending from that spending taking place in Pierce County. Note from Table 2, that professional participants spent, on average, a total of over $1,200 on travel related items during this trip. Roughly $425 dollars of this total was spent in Pierce County. Likewise, amateur anglers spent roughly $430 in the region and only $155 in Pierce County. Finally, non-local spectators spent roughly $200 in the region and only $70 in Pierce County. This pattern of expenditure is fairly consistent with other Wisconsin tourism impact studies and appears to be a fairly reasonable estimate to apply to total numbers of attendees.

The highest amounts of spending by category were found in the hotel, motel, and overnight accommodations category followed by restaurants and automobile spending. Given the varying lengths of trip by each group, the professional participants spent the largest amounts in all categories, particularly hotels, motels, and overnight accommodations and restaurants. This was followed by amateur participants and spectators.

Table 2. Individual per-trip spending habits of non-local IFWT spectators and participants by place of expenditure (in 2003 dollars).
The estimated spending patterns found in Table 2 can be expanded to total numbers of attendees assuming that our sampling was done in a random fashion. After accounting for local attendance, this simple expansion is based on the proportion of total attendance estimates by group to the number of random samples drawn. An estimate of total expenditures resulting from the IFWT is summarized in Table 3.

The total expenditures found in Table 3 account for both extent of spending and total number of attendees. Given the relatively large numbers of spectators compared to participants, the expansion to total spending shows that this group had the highest total spending levels in Pierce County at more than $80,000, followed by professional participants at $55,000 and amateurs at just slightly more than $20,000. Total spending in Pierce County as a result of this event was roughly $156,000.

**Economic impacts of the IFWT**

Located just South and East of the Twin Cities, Pierce County has many of the economic characteristics reflective of a rapidly changing rural economy on the urban fringe. The
total personal income of its 16,000 households (population of roughly 36,800) was roughly $970 million in 2000. This translates into an average total household income of about $68,800. Thus, the economic stimulus of new dollars spent by visitors to the IFWT is quite modest relative to the overall economic structure of the county. Average expenditures for non-local visitors (outlined in Table 2) are expanded to total visitation levels in Table 3. Expenditures are identified by industry groups sensitive to travel expenditures.

When we apply the new dollars outlined in Table 3 to the input-output model of Pierce County, the multiplier effect of inter-industry purchases generates indirect impacts and the increased income of households drives induced impacts. These impacts are summarized for various economic characteristics in Tables 4.

A quick note on the difference between output and value added. Output is the total result of all economic activity and is analogous to gross regional product, gross state product, and gross national product. In other words, it is the total accounting for all regional production. Value added is defined as the value of the region’s business output minus the value of all inputs purchased from other firms. It is therefore a measure of the “profit” or income generated locally. Value added includes a combination of employee compensation, proprietor’s income (“business profit”), other property type income, and indirect business taxes paid to governments.

It is interesting to note from Table 4 that the amount of NEW money brought into Pierce County by people from the outside had broader impacts on the economic structure of Pierce County. This new money had the effect of generated business activity within Pierce County. Results of the spending shock to the input-output model for Pierce County suggests that the direct spending of non-local visitors ($145,000 in 2000 year equivalent) generated a total direct, indirect and induced impact of roughly $188,000 (in year 2000 equivalents). Overall, this reflects an output multiplier of roughly 1.30 which is reasonable given the relatively small size of the Pierce County economy. From the perspective of income, this amount of new spending translated into roughly $77,000 in direct income effect and about $103,000 in total income (value added multiplier of roughly 1.34). From a jobs perspective, this amount of new spending supports roughly 4.1 total jobs with an added indirect and induced effect of roughly .7 jobs (employment multiplier of 1.15).
Table 4. Economic impacts of the In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament to Pierce County, Wisconsin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of impact by 1 digit SIC</th>
<th>Direct Impacts</th>
<th>Indirect Impacts</th>
<th>Induced Impacts</th>
<th>Total Impacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output (IN 2000 DOLLARS):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>1,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,602</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>2,075</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,771</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>4,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPU</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,624</td>
<td>1,880</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>99,051</td>
<td>1,463</td>
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<td>105,528</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIRE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,685</td>
<td>6,649</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>20,300</td>
<td>5,809</td>
<td>5,631</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$145,015</td>
<td>$21,126</td>
<td>$21,918</td>
<td>$188,059</td>
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Total Value Added (IN 2000 DOLLARS):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of impact by 1 digit SIC</th>
<th>Direct Impacts</th>
<th>Indirect Impacts</th>
<th>Induced Impacts</th>
<th>Total Impacts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>378</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Construction</td>
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<td>Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$77,438</td>
<td>$12,193</td>
<td>$13,402</td>
<td>$103,033</td>
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Employment (IN TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS):

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<th>Type of impact by 1 digit SIC</th>
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<th>Indirect Impacts</th>
<th>Induced Impacts</th>
<th>Total Impacts</th>
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<td>Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCPU</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.1 jobs</td>
<td>0.3 jobs</td>
<td>0.4 jobs</td>
<td>4.7 jobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on spending estimates used as shocks as summarized in Table 3.

Tourism marketing issues
In addition to expenditure information, the survey was designed to obtain a limited amount of information about how people learned of event and how they perceived their trip to Pierce County. This is useful in tourism development planning as conducted by various local groups. Examples of activities where this type of marketing information is useful include developing future promotional materials to attract visitors to the area and developing alternative marketing strategies that will be most effective in reaching potential visitors.

When asked whether attendees obtained information about Pierce County before their visit, an interesting result of the survey suggested that most people who know of the event just wander in. To this question, about three quarters (124 responses) of the spectators said they did NOT obtain information about Pierce County. Of the one quarter (42 responses) of the spectators that said they received information, most common responses were from on-line sources, from the municipality of Bay City, and from other regional marketing materials. An open ended question asking for how they learned of the event suggested that relatives (parents, grandparents, and siblings) were very important in disseminated information about the IFWT event in Bay City.

Since Pierce County does not have any major attractions that lure visitors to a particular location for an extended visit, people tend to migrate through the area visiting a number of attractions. One of the survey questions asked what other activities visitors enjoyed while they were in the area. This kind of information will suggest opportunities for the development of marketing strategies fostering relationships among attractions in the area. Responses indicated that visitors also came to see the river and experience rural Wisconsin.

Many of the tournament participants came to the Pierce County area for the first time because of the fishing contest. Another survey question probed the likelihood of them returning to the area for future visits based on their initial experience. Results suggested that if a similar tournament was held again in Bay City, the vast majority would return (158 “yes” with only 7 indicating “no”). Of the small number who said they would not return, the most likely reason was travel distance.

Survey results also suggested that people who came to Pierce County had a positive experience. When asked whether they’d come back to Bay City on some non-event trip, once again, the vast majority indicated that they would indeed return (148 “yes, 10 “no”). When asked about their overall trip satisfaction on a scale of 1 (not satisfied) to 10 (very satisfied), the average response was 8.7 indicated overall satisfaction with the travel experience.

The data collected about visitors’ experiences in the area, where they obtained information, attractions visited, and their level of satisfaction will be helpful to tourism development planners who are involved in targeting their efforts to invite future visitors. If the goal is to encourage people to come to Pierce County to spend money to
support local businesses, community leaders need to develop effective strategies to market the local area. They will also need to consider broader implications associated with the promotion of various types of tourism attractions to determine how well tourism fits within broader initiatives taken to promote economic development in Pierce County.

**Summary and policy implications of these results**

The In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament that took place in Bay City, Wisconsin during June of 2003 and its local impact provides the focus of this report. It is one of a series of fishing events conducted each summer at various locations across the nation. It attracts professional anglers who are matched up with amateur anglers during a multi-day event. Spectators are drawn to the event to see the fishing results and the fishing equipment and promotional information presented by event sponsors.

This project focused on characteristics of event participants and how a fishing tournament such as the IFWT can bring new money into the area as participants travel to the event and make purchases for a variety of local products and services. To gather information about the impact of this event on the local economy, a random face-to-face survey was conducted with attendee groups. These groups included professional anglers, amateur anglers, and spectators.

Results of the survey suggested that trip spending for overnight accommodations, groceries, restaurants, automobile, fishing equipment, and entertainment expenses differed by group type. For instance, professional anglers, on average, spent roughly $1,200 on their trip to the event with just over $425 of this spent in Pierce County. Amateur anglers spent about $430 with about $155 spent in Pierce County. Finally, non-local spectators spent an average of just under $200 on their trip with about $70 being spent in Pierce County. When expanded by group size, results suggested that roughly $156,000 was spent in Pierce County as a result of this event.

Average daily expenditures from the survey of In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament attendees were used as the basis for estimating economic impacts of the event for Pierce County. When total non-local spending was applied to the impact model, results suggest that the overall impact of the event resulted in just over $100,000 in increased local income that supported roughly 5 local jobs. Given the export-base framework of this study, the estimate does not include the expenditure impact of spectators and participants who were locals (from Pierce County). Thus, the economic impact estimates rely solely on "new" dollars flowing into the region from outside.

The In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament acted to stimulate the community’s retail and service sectors with multiplier effects felt in other local business. We estimate that the direct spending of non-local visitors created additional economic activity with an estimated total economic impact on Pierce County of roughly $190,000 in total output.
Although this report details the positive impacts the IFWT will have on the local economy, it does not address whether these positive impacts justify the expense of hosting the event. Other factors, such as IFWT revenue, local promotional activities, and increased public service costs may also contribute to decisions that rest on a full accounting of benefits and costs of the event.

This report focused on the economic impact of IFWT attendees from outside of Pierce County. The effects of the IFWT on local quality-of-life issues associated with hosting an international event was not measured in this report. These effects are often significant and reflect local perceptions of day-to-day life that include issues of local notoriety, resident perceptions of local vibrancy, and community pride.

Limitations exist with this analysis and include survey-based assumptions regarding expenditure patterns, accuracy of projected attendance, ability of the current business structure to accommodate increased numbers of visitors, and general assumptions of input-output analysis. There is, however, ample reason to believe that positive economic impacts have been witnessed in the local economy as a result of the In-Fisherman Walleye Tournament. Weighing these positive impacts with traditional cost-benefit project analysis and inherent underlying political and social implications are necessary to fully address the impact of this tourism event.

References and related readings:


and educational impacts. Staff Paper 95.1, Tourism Research and Resource Center, University of Wisconsin - Extension, Madison, WI. 25 pages.


Appendix A: Survey Instruments
Appendix B:
Regional Context