



PRESS RELEASE

Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau

1101 N. 1st Street, Abilene, TX 79601

Contact: Nanci Liles – 676-2556 or nanci@abilene.com

Travel and Tourism Exceeds \$1.1 million per day!

Visitor spending for the Abilene MSA increased 7.9% from 2007 to 2008, generating \$403.8 million. The fact that the larger Texas economy also experienced more income growth during 2008 than the U.S. economy probably contributed to the relative strength of the Texas travel industry.

2008 Abilene MSA Travel Impact – Visitor Spending at Destination

Travel Spending: \$403.8 million
 Employment: 3,700
 Local Tax Dollars: \$ 6.4 million
 State Tax Dollars: \$ 23.7 million
 Increase: 7.9%

Abilene MSA (MSA includes Callahan, Jones and Taylor)

Visitor Spending by Commodity (\$Millions)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Commodity (\$millions)</u>
•	\$41.6	\$45.3	overnight accommodations
•	\$56.3	\$59	food and beverage services
•	\$14.2	\$15	food stores
•	\$143.7	\$167.1	ground transportation and motor fuel
•	\$44.2	\$44.6	entertainment, arts and recreation (sports, museums, amusement)
•	\$71.4	\$70.1	retail
•	\$2.6	\$2.7	air transportation (visitor only)
•	3.08	2.90	Visitors

In 2008, the Gross Domestic Product of the Texas travel industry was \$23.8 billion. Of the leading export-oriented industries in the state, only oil and gas production and related manufacturing had a significantly higher GDP.

“The 2008 statistics validate the trends we were experiencing in 2008; people were still traveling, but spending less on discretionary commodities,” says Nanci Liles, Executive Director of the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Texas is one of the most visited states in the United States and tourism in Abilene remains strong, increasing 7.9 percent. We have an industry generating over 3,700 jobs in our area... it’s called **tourism**,” explains Liles. **New figures show tourism creates 3,700 jobs in the Abilene MSA; diversifies the economy by \$403.8 million and generates local tax revenue of \$6.4 million.** Higher room rates and gasoline prices accounted for a share of this increase in travel spending.

The Abilene MSA hosted fewer visitors, but a greater percentage spent the night and stayed longer. The purpose of such travel can be for business, pleasure, shopping, to attend meetings, or for personal, medical, or educational purposes. Without this travel-generated tax revenue, each household in Texas would have had to pay **\$890** in additional local, state, and federal taxes to maintain current service levels.

Local and state tax revenues directly generated by travel spending were \$30.2 million in 2008. Local tax revenues alone generate \$6.4 million. New demographics are also available; more visitors are from San Antonio, visitors are spending \$7 less (from \$113 to \$106); and visitors have a higher household income of \$81,300, up from \$78,600.

Compared to Texas travel, the Abilene MSA showed a high representation of the following travel segments:

Purpose of Stay: See Friend/Relative
Activities: Outdoor Sports
Party Composition: Adults traveling alone and Couples
Length of Stay: Day Trips
Primary Mode of Transportation: Auto
Demographics: 18-34 and 35-49 Age Groups
Larger share of travel by Texans

Travel to Abilene Highlights:

Average party size: 1.86
Average length of stay – 2.06 (overnight and days); 3.25 days (overnight only)
76% traveled within 250 miles
Average spending: \$106
48% stayed in paid hotel/motel accommodations and 46% stayed at non-paid accommodations
Average age: 44
Average household income: \$81,300

The Office of the Governor Economic Development and Tourism provides research for the travel industry. The full report is found at: <http://www.travel.state.tx.us/TravelResearch/Economic-Impact.aspx>