

News Release

December 26, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pocono Summer Camps A \$123 Million Industry Paying Big Taxes

The Wayne County Camp Alliance, representing 30 Pocono summer camps, has released the results of an extensive economic study on the region's summer camp industry. It indicates the industry contributes \$123 million per year in regional economic impacts. There are at least 60 summer camps in the Poconos (including Wayne, Pike, Monroe and part of Susquehanna Counties, Pennsylvania). They not only create jobs and business for others, but also pay an average of over \$101,000 each annually in local property taxes.

The study, conducted by Shepstone Management Company with assistance from the Wayne County Planning Department, included detailed surveys of Pocono summer camps as well their employees, parents and camp alumni. Altogether, over 850 parties participated in the surveys yielding crucial information about the Pocono summer camp industry. These facts and opinions were combined with government data on taxes paid, employment statistics and tax records to yield a full picture of just how much the industry does for the region.

The typical Pocono summer camp has existed for 66 years, according to the study. "It's rather amazing to find a business sector where there is such incredible longevity," stated principal study author Tom Shepstone. "It's not unusual to find individual enterprise that have been around that long, but this is the average for all our summer camps, indicating they have enormous staying power from their investments in the communities where they're located." The study, moreover, indicates Pocono summer camps continue to invest roughly \$30 million per year upgrading their facilities in the region, the typical camp having spent \$3 million over the last five years on capital projects.

News Release

The typical camp also spends about \$3.5 million annually on employees, food and supplies, with \$1.5 million of that being spent locally, including an average of \$337,500 on local employees. Some 81% of employees rate their jobs as “excellent.”

There are considerable taxes among those expenditures. Wayne County camps alone paid over \$2.5 million in property taxes in 2016. They paid from 12% to 25% of such taxes in the top five camp communities within the county and 2.3% of property taxes countywide.

Pocono summer camps, though they are typically businesses, preserve valuable open space as well. The average camp is, in fact, approximately 280 acres in size and the bulk of the land involved is maintained as forest.

Importantly, 95% of camper parents rated the facilities used by their children as “excellent.” Reasons included quality of programs (36%), quality of the facilities (22%) and the leadership, reputation and value of the camp (16%). Some 46% of camper parents stated that visiting the camp made them want to visit the area for other reasons.

A large number of persons visit camps during the camping season. With an average number of visitors per camp of 1,556, the 60 Poconos region camps brings roughly 90,000 persons per year to the region.

While visiting the area, these parents spent an average of \$405 per day in the region on lodging, dining and other services, generating a direct impact on the regional economy of \$20,650,000 in tourism expenditures; and 16% of camper parents stated that visiting the camp made them want to consider investing in the area.

Mark Zides, spokesperson for the Wayne County Camp Alliance, said he was extremely proud of the industry’s contributions to the regional economy. The Alliance camps are intentional in their support of the local communities and the local economy. “We get tremendous support from community leaders where we operate,” he stated. “It’s essential to our success and this study should help them communicate the contributions of the summer camp industry to others as well.”

News Release

The full study, including several dozen charts and tables may be downloaded from www.shepstone.net/PoconoCamps.pdf.

###

For more information, contact:

Tom Shepstone, 570-251-9550 or mail@shepstone.net