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CBER
CENTER FOR BUSINESS
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For Immediate Release

09.05.14

CBER Study Concludes \$22.2 Million is Added to WV Economy Annually from Hatfield-McCoy Trails

The Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at Marshall University recently completed a study for the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority (HMRRA) which concluded the trails' presence contributes an estimated \$22.2 million to the West Virginia economy each year, approximately 85 percent of which is attributable to non-local visitor spending.

"The idea that our project is providing that much impact in the local economy was truly impressive. We have always known that our riders and activities made a net positive impression on the economy and that the trails' presence created jobs and economic development, but the fact we had grown so much since our last study [completed by CBER in 2006] and that the impact had increased so much during that period was truly a surprise," Jeffrey Lusk, Executive Director of the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority, said.

The analysis estimated the economic activity and fiscal revenues generated from the presence of the Hatfield-McCoy Trails in the State of West Virginia. These impacts are based on two essential inputs: operational expenses from the Hatfield-McCoy Trails and spending by out-of-state visitors while using the Trails network. A survey also provided an opportunity to better understand the experiences of Hatfield-McCoy Trails riders.

"The Hatfield-McCoy Trails system provides the State an increasing economic and fiscal benefit due to its operations and the visitors it attracts. In addition to the quantified impacts, we also observed improvements in regional economic characteristics—including growth in per capita income and labor force participation that has exceeded changes statewide—in the seven West Virginia counties with a current Trails presence," Elizabeth Pardue, Demographic Research Specialist at CBER, said.

The total economic impact of the Trails increased nearly 74 percent since a similar analysis completed by CBER in 2006. This improvement outpaced statewide GDP by more than twofold. From a fiscal perspective, the presence of the Trails network generates nearly \$2 million statewide annually, approximately 77 percent of which is attributable to sales taxes from non-local visitor spending. The analysis also estimated that approximately 237 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions are sustained statewide.

CBER provides economic research to public, private and non-profit sectors, specializing in the areas of energy, policy, education and health. For more information about CBER visit marshall.edu/cber.

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