

System
Indicators

Demographics and Economy



Travel and Tourism Spending (2007)

September 2011

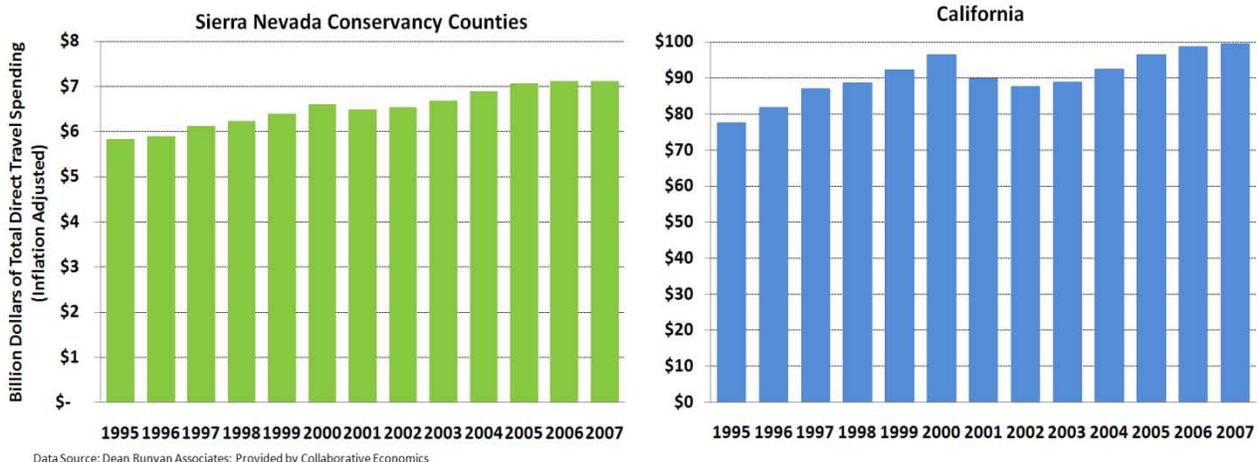
Travel and Tourism Spending



The Sierra Nevada Region’s wealth of natural assets such as national parks and countless recreation opportunities attracts visitors from across the globe, which makes travel and tourism an important component of the Region’s economic activity. Properly gauging the size, trend, and impacts of this economic sector is important to optimizing the development of this huge resource for the welfare of communities and residents in a sustainable manner.

Direct travel spending in the 22 counties that lie entirely or partly within the Sierra Nevada region (including those portions that lie outside the SNC’s boundaries) increased by 22 percent between 1995 and 2007, reaching a high of \$7.1 billion. However, since 2005, total travel spending in these counties has plateaued. Travel spending for California as a whole increased 28 percent since 1995, though year-to-year growth was more variable. Focusing on the twelve counties entirely within the SNC Region, growth in direct travel spending was a little lower at 19 percent over the twelve years.

Total Direct Travel Spending



Because the data were reported only for whole counties, it is not possible to separate out that portion of the spending in the counties that are only partly in the SNC Region. Travel spending in 2007 strictly within the entire SNC Region was certainly much less than the \$7.2 billion reported for all 22 counties. About \$1.9 billion was spent in the twelve counties entirely within the SNC Region in 2007.

With regard to travel spending in the 10 counties that are mostly outside the SNC Region, what amount of the \$5.8 billion was actually spent inside the Region would be difficult to tease out. Certainly, some significant portion of the travel spending in those counties is inside the Region. Most of these counties are gateways to the Sierra and the SNC portion of them include Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Lake Isabella, Yosemite, Mt. Lassen, Lake Oroville, and recreation in the Central Subregion including major ski areas. On the other hand, some travel spending related to getting to the Sierra Nevada (such as gas) is spent in the Central Valley portion of

these counties. A reasonable estimate on total spending related to tourism in the SNC Region might be between \$3 billion and \$5 billion.

Likely due mostly to rising gas prices, Ground Transportation and Motor Fuel spending has experienced the most dramatic uptick in spending, increasing 99 percent between 1995 and 2007. Most other travel spending categories increased to a lesser extent, but retail sales have declined in recent years.

In 1995, total direct travel spending in the 22 counties that comprise the SNC Region accounted for 7.5 percent of total travel spending for California (the counties entirely within the SNC Region accounted for two percent of state travel spending). By 2007, this number had dropped 0.4 percent, to 7.1 percent for the 22 counties (1.9 percent for counties entirely within the SNC Region).

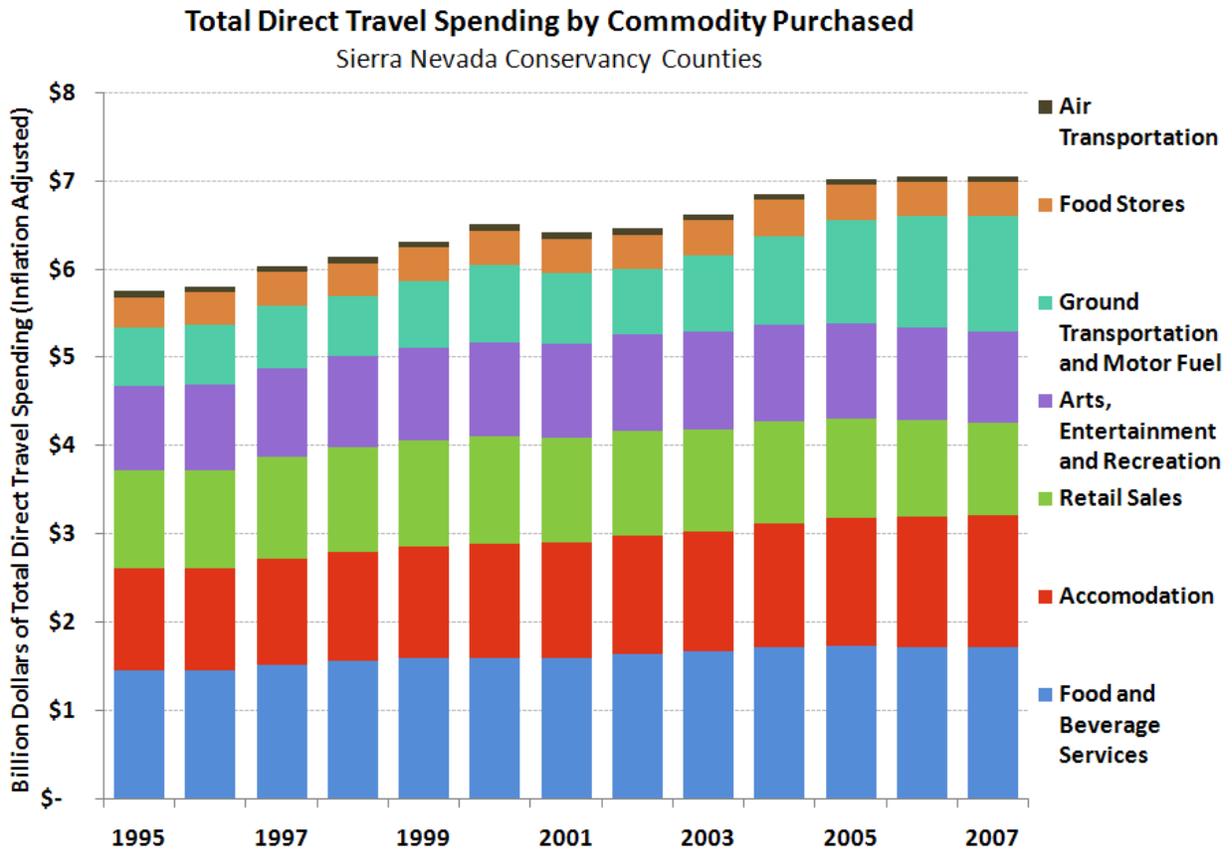
All of these figures are prior to 2008, when the recession hit. The next Indicator update will capture that impact. There are some indications that Sierra tourism has fared comparatively well in these tough economic times. In the tourism-centric East Subregion, unemployment is well below the state level, and Mariposa County had 17% GDP growth in 2009, possibly due to strong

Total Direct Travel Spending by County (in dollars)					
		1995	2007	Percent Change 95-07	% of County Pop. in SNC Region
Counties Entirely within the SNC Region	Alpine	25,873,173	28,268,863	9%	100%
	Amador	86,010,817	115,850,939	35%	98%
	Calaveras	136,498,467	157,277,672	15%	100%
	Inyo	166,986,854	195,312,141	17%	95%
	Lassen	58,319,530	66,714,516	14%	100%
	Mariposa	294,674,457	315,686,098	7%	100%
	Modoc	19,299,988	23,129,069	20%	89%
	Mono	288,940,403	393,810,954	36%	100%
	Nevada	226,565,079	286,183,685	26%	100%
	Plumas	103,212,980	107,216,086	4%	100%
	Sierra	16,502,888	18,708,847	13%	100%
	Tuolumne	148,665,851	168,893,604	14%	100%
Counties Partially within the SNC Region	Butte	213,978,130	266,344,083	24%	29%
	El Dorado	637,319,175	625,512,831	-2%	83%
	Fresno	893,953,076	1,119,446,957	25%	2%
	Kern	984,858,818	1,232,522,407	25%	2%
	Madera	175,518,009	205,797,319	17%	19%
	Placer	584,174,280	810,134,203	39%	33%
	Shasta	318,030,240	375,410,495	18%	11%
	Tehama	97,339,071	122,532,670	26%	3%
	Tulare	292,576,633	388,465,569	33%	2%
	Yuba	61,815,904	82,442,283	33%	15%
Total		5,831,113,823	7,105,661,292	22%	21%

Percent Change in Travel Spending in the 22 Counties of the SNC Region		
Category	1995-2007	2006-2007
Food and Beverage Services	+18%	+0.2%
Accommodation	+24%	+1%
Retail Sales	-4%	-4%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	+6%	-3%
Ground Transportation & Motor Fuel	+99%	+4%
Food Stores	+14%	+0.3%
Air Transportation	-12%	-1%

tourism related to Yosemite as people find the Sierra Nevada a relative bargain for their vacation dollars in tough economic times.

Direct travel spending is well distributed amount the five largest categories for the 22 counties. Food and beverage services is the largest component at about 24 percent of total spending in 2007. Accommodation accounted for about 21 percent and ground transportation just under 19 percent.



Data Source: Dean Runyan Associates; Provided by Collaborative Economics