

Economic Impact of the 2015 Blood Sweat and Gears

Blood Sweat and Gears (BSG) is a demanding long distance road bike ride with a start and finish point in Valle Crucis, North Carolina. The 100 mile route roughly circles Boone and includes 21 miles on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The terrain is constantly changing with hills of all lengths and a large number of curves. The cumulative climbing elevation is 8800 feet with the climb up to the gap at Snake Mountain reaching an 18-20% grade. There is also a 50 mile ride option with 4200 feet climbing elevation. The 17th annual BSG was held on Saturday June 26th.

Following the 2015 ride an online survey was administered to participants using Survey Monkey®. Email invitations were sent to 1281 riders who had registered for the 2015 BSG. After the initial email invitation was sent on July 2 and a reminder on July 9, 455 responses were received and 418 riders completed the survey. The completed response rate was 33%.

Of the 91% percent of the respondents who participated in the 2015 ride (n=382), 58% participated in the 100 mile ride. Sixty-nine percent were extremely satisfied with the BSG and another 22% were moderately satisfied. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents traveled to the High Country and stayed overnight. Of these, 37% stayed one night and 43% stayed two nights. Forty-five percent of overnight stays were in a hotel, 52% were in a rental house and 3% were at a campsite.

Considering those respondents who participated in the 2015 ride and traveled from their homes to the area, average total spending was \$504 during their stay. The top two categories for expenditures were lodging and food/supplies. Average lodging expenditures were \$245 and average food expenditures were \$149. In addition, 21% of the non-locals took an average of 3 trips to the area before the 2015 BSG to train on the course. The average spending for each training trip was \$516.

Summing this over the total number of non-local participants in 2015 (n=1012) yields total direct spending of \$509 thousand associated with the BSG event. Direct spending circulates through the regional economy and generates additional spending through the “multiplier effect.” Applying a RIMS II multiplier of for each specific business sector yields a total economic impact of \$826 thousand. In addition, training ride spending totaled \$295 thousand with an economic impact of \$437 thousand. The total economic impact of the 2015 BSG was \$1.26 million. The 95% confidence interval for this estimate is \$1.1 to \$1.4 million. If each participant stayed one additional night and added one additional member to their travel party, the economic impact would be \$1.62 million.

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