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Economic Impact of the 2017 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 a 20% grade. There is also a 50 mile ride option with 4200 feet climbing elevation. The 19th annual BSG was held on Saturday June 25.

Following the 2017 ride an online survey was administered to participants using Survey Monkey©. The survey was administered to 1,142 riders who had registered for the 2017 BSG. After the initial email invitation was sent on July 5 and two reminders on July 14 and July 24, 399 responses were received and 375 riders completed the survey. The completed response rate was 33%.

Of the 93% percent of the respondents who participated in the 2017 ride (n=349), 56% participated in the 90 mile ride. Eighty-two percent were extremely satisfied with the BSG and another 16% were moderately satisfied. 86% of the respondents traveled to the High Country and stayed overnight. Of these, 40% stayed one night and 43% stayed two nights. Fifty percent of overnight stays were in a hotel, 45% were in a rental house and 5% were at a campsite.

Considering those respondents who participated in the 2017 ride and traveled from their homes to the area, average total spending was \$478 during their stay. The top two categories for expenditures were lodging and food/supplies. Average lodging expenditures were \$235 and average food expenditures were \$127.

Summing these expenditures over the total number of non-local participants in 2017 yields total direct spending of \$521 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 1.48 for the tourism sector yields a total economic impact of \$771 thousand.

This is a project of the App State Student Chapter of NABE and the CERPA Undergraduate Research Program. Jessica Robinson and Ariana Welsh were the lead analysts for this report. Contact: John Whitehead, Professor of Economics, (828)262-6121 or whiteheadjc@appstate.edu.