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## **Economic Impact of the 2017 Blue Ridge Brutal**

The Blue Ridge Brutal (BRB) is a long distance road bike ride. The start and finish point is the Ashe Civic Center in West Jefferson, North Carolina. There are 100, 75 and 57 mile ride options and each travels through some of the most beautiful scenery in North Carolina. All riders spend at least 20 miles on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Following the 2017 ride an online survey was administered to participants using Survey Monkey©. Email invitations were sent to 326 riders who had registered for the BRB on September 5, 2017. After the initial an email reminder was sent to those who had not responded on September 12. Ten emails bounced due to bad email addresses. One hundred and fifty responses were received and 140 riders completed the survey. The response rate was 43%.

Of the eighty-four percent of the respondents who participated in the 2017 ride, 90% were extremely satisfied with the BRB. Sixty-four percent of the respondents traveled to the West Jefferson area and stayed overnight. Of these, 36% stayed one night, 43% stayed two nights and 21% stayed more than two nights. Fifty percent of overnight stays were in a hotel, 44% were in a rental house, 2% were at a campsite and 4% were in a bed and breakfast.

Considering those respondents who participated in the 2017 ride and traveled from their homes to the area, average total spending was \$370 during their stay. The top two categories for expenditures were lodging and food/supplies. Average lodging expenditures were \$166 and average food expenditures were \$109.

Summing this over the total number of non-local participants in 2017 yields total direct spending of \$78,440 associated with the BRB 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 \$116,091.

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*This is a project of the App State Student Chapter of the NABE and the CERPA Undergraduate Research Program. Chapter members who contributed to the 2017 BRB Economic Impact Report are Mallory Vannoy and Luis Rangel. Contact: John Whitehead, Professor of Economics, (828)262-6121 or whiteheadjc@appstate.edu.*