

## Executive Summary

The 2004 Atlantic City Visitor Profile (ACVP04) surveyed more than 3,400 visitors during their visit to measure their characteristics, activities, and attitudes. This report describes the research results and discusses their implications for promoting tourism.

### The Visit

- Most (85%) visitors are coming primarily to gamble. The rest are coming to attend an event at the Convention Center or Boardwalk Hall (3%) or to participate in some other tourist activity such as walk the Boardwalk, eat in a restaurant, or attend a casino show (12%).
- Regardless of their primary purpose, most visitors will do three things: eat in a casino restaurant, gamble, and walk on the Boardwalk. Other activities, such as shopping on the Boardwalk or at The Walk, depend on the location of the visitor's primary activity.
- The length of time between when a typical visitor starts planning the trip and when she arrives varies by purpose and length of visit. The largest visitor segment, day-trippers who come primarily to gamble, start planning the trip a week before they come. Visitors who are coming primarily to attend a Convention Center or Boardwalk Hall event typically start planning their trip three to four weeks before they come. This planning period includes ample time to communicate information to all visitor segments about events and attractions to enhance and perhaps extend their visit.
- Two-thirds of all visitors come and return home the same day. Most of the one-third who spend the night stay in casino hotels. Casinos' complimentary room offers are an important influence in the decision to spend the night. One-sixth of visitors from southern New Jersey and one-fourth of visitors from southeastern Pennsylvania, who could return home within a two hours, spend the night.
- The number of activities during a visit increases only slightly if the visitor spends the night. Longer visits typically involve more of the same activities.
- Most visitors, including the day-tripper, gamble in more than one casino. The overnight visitor typically plays in two casinos even if the visitor is staying in a complimentary casino hotel room.
- The typical visitor comes with one other person (approximately one-third of the couples are two women). They rarely bring children.

## **The Visitor**

- Comparisons of the demographic characteristics of Atlantic City visitors with the adult population in the tri-state area that provides three-fourths of all visitors indicate that visitors are similar to the general population on most characteristics. The main exception is gender. Women make up a disproportionately large segment of the visitor population.
- Almost all visitors (96%) have been to Atlantic City before the current visit. Those visitors who have come to gamble typically come to Atlantic City seven times a year. Visitors who come for a purpose other than gambling typically come to Atlantic City three times a year. The frequency of visits implies that 26% of the adult population in the tri-state area annually visit Atlantic City.
- One in four visitors has gambled at another location during the past year. Gambling somewhere else does not reduce the frequency of Atlantic City visits.

## **The Economic Value of the Visit**

- The widespread use of casino player rewards for lodging, meals, and event tickets complicates the calculation of the economic value of a visit. Many visitors have paid the expenses of their current visit by gambling during previous visits. As a result, the direct out-of-pocket costs of major expenses (lodging, meals, and entertainment) are often zero.
- The typical visitor has \$184 in expenses during the visit. Total expenses increase from \$133 for day-trippers to \$575 for visitors who spend three days.
- Gambling expenses (loss) is the largest expense category. The average per visit gambling loss (\$144), based on 2004 aggregate statistics, is 72% of the typical visitor's bankroll (\$200). Gambling losses (\$4.8 billion) pay for the activity during the current visit and for nongaming activities on future visits (e.g., free or discounted food and lodging).
- The total economic impact of Atlantic City visitation in 2004 is \$6.5 billion.

## **Attitudes Toward the Visit**

- There is a strong positive consensus about the visit and the direction of changes in Atlantic City and the Boardwalk. Comparison with attitudes measured in the 1998 survey indicates that visitors' satisfaction with their own experience and perceptions of Atlantic City have greatly improved.
- As a consequence of this positive experience and perception, most (88%) visitors think it is very likely that they will return to Atlantic City within six

months. There is a strong consensus that they will return, even among those who came for purposes other than gambling.

## **Marketing Issues**

- In addition to word-of mouth, Web-based information and direct mail are the most important trip planning information sources, both for general trip planning and for planning their current visit to Atlantic City. Although only a small minority access [WWW.ATLANTICCITY.COM](http://WWW.ATLANTICCITY.COM), each Web site feature is used.
- A new gaming facility nearer the visitor's home, either a basic slot facility or a full-service casino, is expected to have minimal impact on the frequency with which current visitors come to Atlantic City. A large majority will come as often as they do now. There are no important differences in loyalty to Atlantic City by distance from home or size of bankroll.
- Evidence of externalities from individual (public and private) venues' marketing supports a collective marketing program for Atlantic City, similar to that currently done for Las Vegas and other tourist destinations. A collective marketing approach would allow description of the many activities that attract visitors and therefore would be more in line with what visitors actually do when they come to town.
- There are no important racial or ethnic group differences in activities during the visit to indicate that targeted marketing programs, beyond promotion of specific ethnic-themed events, are warranted.