

# TRAVEL BAROMETER, Spring 2014

## Overall Performance

The indicators used in the "travel barometer" for New Hampshire show that Spring 2014 was a positive period for the State's travel sector when compared with Spring 2013. In fact, it was the best spring in the last two decades. Real spending at lodgings after inflation-adjustment was a record high since the INHS started tracking this data in 1989. Both visitor counts and spending were estimated to be the highest since 2006. Business travels appeared to have changed little. Day travelers increased at a slightly faster pace than overnight travelers.

### Estimated Visitor Counts and Spending (in millions)

Visitor counts and spending are estimated by the INHS, and are indicative of the health of all tourism industries in the state collectively, which include not only lodging and restaurants, but also arts, entertainment, and recreation.

Indicator	Sales	% from prior year
R&M	\$673.0	5.0%
Restaurants	\$448.5	4.8%
Rooms	\$81.1	3.6%
Combination	\$19.4	0.1%
Other Food Service	\$124.0	7.3%
R&M_T	\$410.8	6.2%
CPI	237	1.9%

Indicator	Value	% from prior year
Visitor Trips	6.96	4.6%
Visitor Days	9.83	1.8%
Visitor Spending	\$960	6.6%
Visitor Spending per Day	\$98	4.7%
Retail Spending	\$280	6.5%

### Rooms and Meals Sales (in millions)

Rooms and meals sales are the baseline measurement of the tourism sector, which provides the basis of other tourism indicators such as traveler counts and spending. It's the official count of sales as reported by the NHDRA. Nearly all of lodging (Rooms) and meals at hotels and resorts (Combination) are paid by travelers, while only about half of the restaurant meals are estimated to be paid by travelers.

### **Employment in Tourism Sector** (in thousands)

The number of employed residents in the state is from the Household survey, and is indicative of the health of the state's overall economy. The numbers of jobs in tourism industries are from the Establishment Survey, and collectively indicate the health of the tourism sector. It is the only tourism indicator that is publicly available and comparable across different states in the country.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>% from prior year</b>
<b>Employed Residents</b>	709	1.2%
<b>Jobs in Arts, Entertainment, Recreation</b>	9.7	-4.3%
<b>Jobs in Accommodations</b>	7.4	-4.3%
<b>Jobs in A, E, R and A (sum of the two above)</b>	17.1	-4.3%
<b>Jobs in Leisure and Hospitality</b>	62.9	0.5%

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>% from prior year</b>
<b>Vehicle Rentals</b>	\$20.8	27.7%
<b>Airline Passengers</b>	273,780	-11.2%
<b>Hotel Occupancy</b>	50.5%	-1.3%

### **Entertainment and Amenities**

The tourism sector also includes arts, entertainment, and recreation industries. Fishing and hunting licenses sales and snowmobile registrations include only those sold to out-of-state residents.

### **Business Travelers**

The volume of business travelers may be reflected in such variables as vehicle rentals, airline passengers, and hotel occupancy rate.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>% from prior year</b>
<b>Ski Areas Attendance</b>	289,534	5.1%
<b>Snowmobile Registrations</b>	NA	NA

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Vehicle Counts</b>	<b>% from prior year</b>
<b>US 3 Groveton</b>	2,564	1.9%
<b>US 2 Jefferson</b>	3,263	-8.9%
<b>US 302 Bartlett</b>	2,358	-8.8%
<b>I-93 Lincoln</b>	8,278	0.5%
<b>NH 12 Claremont</b>	8,610	-1.8%
<b>I-89 Sutton</b>	17,232	2.9%
<b>NH 16 Ossipee</b>	10,468	-1.5%
<b>NH 11 Alton</b>	5,039	-1.2%
<b>NH 101 Temple</b>	7,496	0.2%
<b>NH 9 Chesterfield</b>	10,933	0.4%
<b>I-93 S Concord</b>	65,727	1.3%
<b>NH 101 Exeter</b>	35,881	4.6%
<b>Total Traffic Counts</b>	177,849	1.2%

### **Traffic Counts**

The vehicle traffic counts should be reflective of changes in the volume of traveler counts. The vehicle counts are collected on Saturdays, in order to reduce the volume of commuter traffic in the data. Furthermore, 12 recorders are selected nearby major travel destinations to reflect traveler traffic in each of the seven travel regions in the State.

Great North Woods: Groveton, Jefferson

White Mountain: Lincoln, Bartlett

Lakes: Ossipee, Alton

Dartmouth Lakes Sunapee: Sutton, Claremont

Monadnock: Temple, Chesterfield

Merrimack Valley: Concord

Seacoast: Exeter

### **Weather**

Tourism is one sector whose fortune is left at the mercy of the mother nature. Snow brings business during winter, while rain does the opposite during summer.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>% from prior year</b>
<b>Gas Price</b>	\$3.68	1.0%
<b>DTTD Guidebook Requests</b>	14,076	-31.9%
<b>Visitnh.gov Total Sessions</b>	247,358	15.0%
<b>Canadian Dollar</b>	\$0.909	-7.2%
<b>British Pound</b>	\$1.674	9.9%
<b>Interest Rate Spread</b>	1575	6.2%

### **Comparison with New England and U.S.**

The number of jobs estimates in the leisure and hospitality sector from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is the only tourism indicator that is comparable across states in the country. Therefore, it provides a glance of the performance of the state's tourism sector relative to other states in New England and the rest of the country.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>% from prior year</b>
<b>Days with Snowcover</b>	12	-7.7%

### **Leading Indicators**

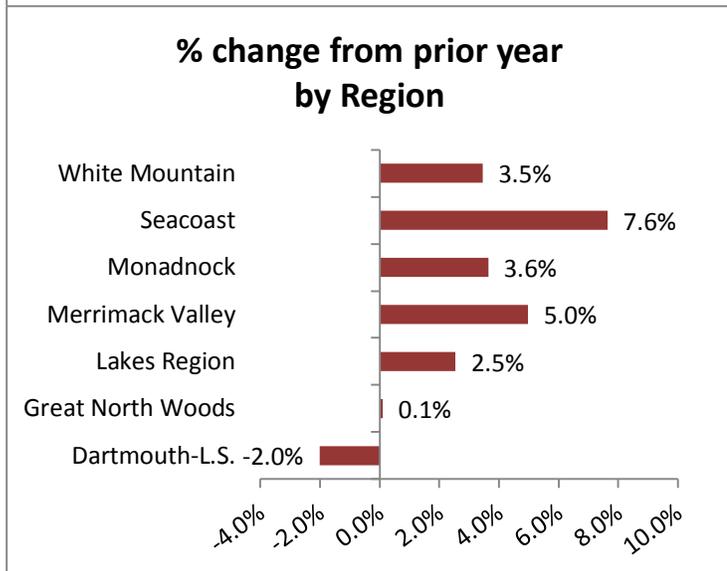
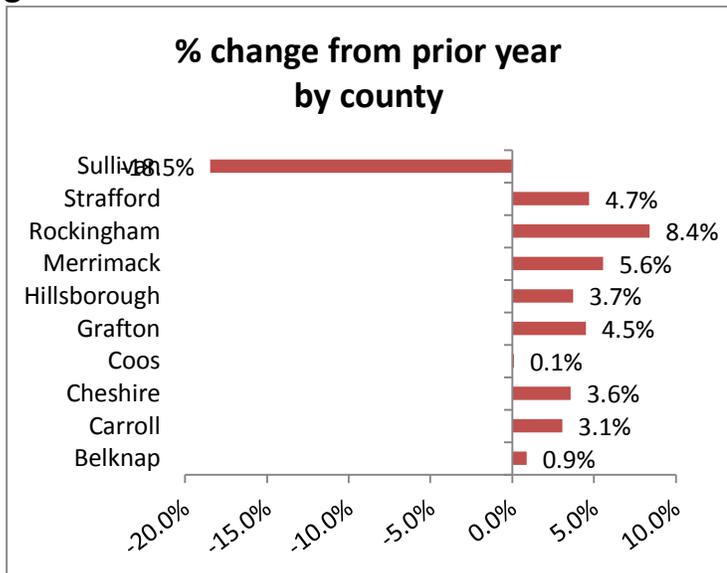
Increases in the leading indicators may be indicative of more businesses for the tourism sector in the near future, while decreases may mean the opposite. An exception is the gas price. A substantial increase in gas prices may discourage traveling.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Jobs in Leisure and Hospitality</b>	<b>% from prior year</b>
<b>New Hampshire</b>	62.9	0.5%
<b>Connecticut</b>	149.3	3.1%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	326.1	0.8%
<b>Maine</b>	58.5	2.0%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	52.9	2.9%
<b>Vermont</b>	33.4	2.0%
<b>New England</b>	683.1	1.6%
<b>United States</b>	14,483	2.8%

## ROOMS AND MEALS SALES, Spring 2014

	Sales	% of State
<b>State</b>	\$671	100%
<b>County</b>		
<b>Belknap</b>	\$33	5%
<b>Carroll</b>	\$38	6%
<b>Cheshire</b>	\$29	4%
<b>Coos</b>	\$14	2%
<b>Grafton</b>	\$67	10%
<b>Hillsborough</b>	\$190	28%
<b>Merrimack</b>	\$63	9%
<b>Rockingham</b>	\$186	28%
<b>Strafford</b>	\$43	6%
<b>Sullivan</b>	\$8	1%
<b>Region</b>		
<b>Great North Woods</b>	\$4	1%
<b>White Mountain</b>	\$83	12%
<b>Lakes Region</b>	\$64	10%
<b>Dartmouth-L.S.</b>	\$31	5%
<b>Monadnock</b>	\$50	8%
<b>Merrimack Valley</b>	\$275	41%
<b>Seacoast</b>	\$162	24%

Sales are in millions of dollars.  
It does not include vehicle rentals.

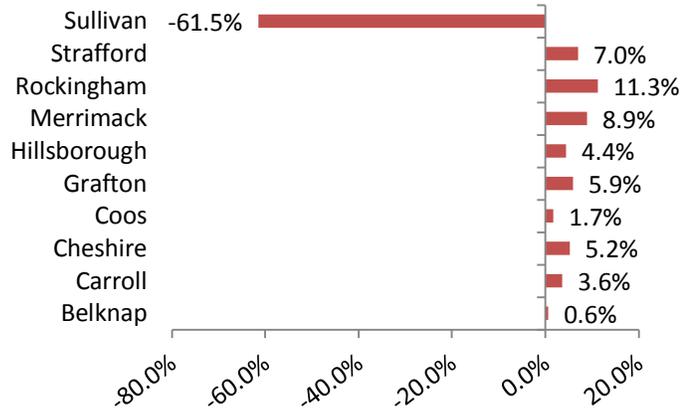


## ROOMS AND MEALS SALES PAID BY TRAVELERS, Spring 2014

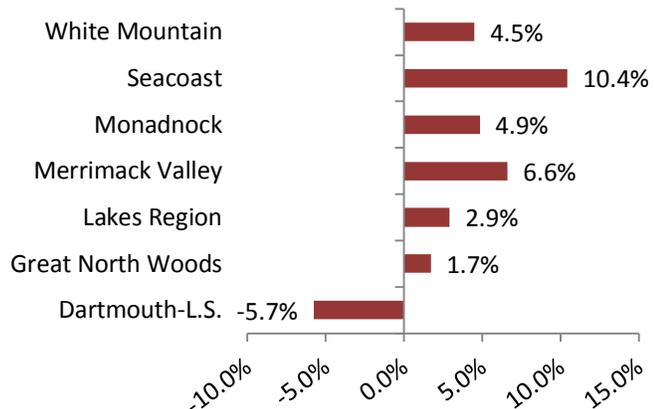
	Sales	% of State
<b>State</b>	\$411	100%
<b>County</b>		
Belknap	\$22	5%
Carroll	\$29	7%
Cheshire	\$16	4%
Coos	\$9	2%
Grafton	\$45	11%
Hillsborough	\$106	26%
Merrimack	\$34	8%
Rockingham	\$122	30%
Strafford	\$26	6%
Sullivan	\$1	0%
<b>Region</b>		
Great North Woods	\$3	1%
White Mountain	\$62	15%
Lakes Region	\$40	10%
Dartmouth-L.S.	\$16	4%
Monadnock	\$29	7%
Merrimack Valley	\$154	37%
Seacoast	\$107	26%

Sales are in millions of dollars.  
It does not include vehicle rentals.

### % change from prior year by County



### % change from prior year by Region



## **DEFINITION OF THE INDICATORS**

### *Visitor trips and days*

A traveler visiting a travel destination in New Hampshire is counted as one visitor trip, whether the traveler is New Hampshire resident or not. If the travel lasts three days, then the trip is counted as three visitor days. Visitor counts are estimated by the INHS based on a multitude of tourism indicators as well as visitor surveys conducted by a third party research firm, and benchmarked to sales and employment data of the tourism industries obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

### *Visitor and retail spending*

Total visitor spending represents direct purchases made by travelers to New Hampshire, which includes sales of lodging, restaurant meals, entertainment, amenities, and transportation. Visitor spending is estimated by the INHS based on a multitude of tourism indicators as well as visitor surveys conducted by a third party research firm, and benchmarked to sales and employment data of the tourism industries obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

### *Rooms and Meals Tax Revenues*

Rooms and meals tax revenues data is considered as one of the most important indicators for the tourism sector, the one that provides the basis for estimating other tourism indicators. There are two major reasons for this. First, it is an official amount, not an estimate, of tax collected on sales of lodging and meals, as reported by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue. Secondly, the lodging and restaurant industry is a major player in the tourism sector in terms of employment and sales.

### *Employment*

The report includes two different sources of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data – the household survey and the establishment survey. The number of employed residents is estimated from the household survey, and is indicative of the state-wide labor market. On the other hand, the number of jobs in tourism industries is estimated from the establishment survey, and is reflective of the health of the tourism sector.

### *Gasoline Prices*

New England Regular Conventional Retail Gasoline Prices (Dollars per Gallon) are obtained from

the U.S. Energy Information Administration. A substantial increase in gasoline prices may discourage traveling.

### *Saturday Traffic Counts*

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation collects vehicle traffic counts via 60 plus automatic recorders placed throughout the state. The average Saturday vehicle traffic counts are used, in order to reduce the volume of *commuter traffic* in the data. Furthermore, 12 recorders are selected nearly major travel destinations to reflect *traveler traffic* in each of the seven travel regions in the State.

### *Hotel Occupancy Rate*

The monthly values of the hotel occupancy rate are obtained from the Smith Travel Research once a year. Thus, seasonal values until the next release of the data are estimated by the INHS.

### *Airline Passengers*

It measures the number of passengers enplaning at the Manchester airport. It's one of the indicators for the business travel volume.

### *Vehicle Rentals*

It measures spending on motor vehicle rentals subject to the Rooms and Meals Tax. It's one of the indicators for the business travel volume.

### *Attractions Attendance*

It counts attendance at nine seasonal attractions during summer in the state.

### *Requests for DTTD Guidebooks*

It counts the number of requests for DTTD Guidebooks. It's considered as one of the leading indicators for the tourism sector.

### *Visitnh.gov Total Sessions*

It counts the number of total sessions at [www.visitnh.gov](http://www.visitnh.gov). It's considered as one of the leading

indicators for the tourism sector.

### *The Canadian Dollar*

The value of the Canadian dollar relative to the United States' dollar is an indicator of present and future travel by the Canadian tourist in New Hampshire. Canada is the most important source of foreign tourists in the state. An increase in the value of Canadian dollar per the U.S. dollar makes traveling to the United States more affordable for Canadians in their currency, which may lead to an increase in the number of Canadian travelers to New Hampshire, other things equal. Thus, it is considered as a leading indicator for the state's tourism sector.

### *The British Pound*

Great Britain is the largest source of foreign travelers in New Hampshire after Canada. An increase in the value of British pound per the U.S. dollar makes traveling to the United States more affordable for the British in their currency, which may lead to an increase in the number of British travelers to New Hampshire, other things equal. Thus, it is considered as a leading indicator for the state's tourism sector.

### *Interest Rate Spread*

The interest rate spread, the 10 year Treasury less the Federal Funds, is considered one of the best leading indicators for the national economy. The indicator is the sum of all the past values plus the spread in the current period. Therefore, it decreases when the current spread is negative (the 10 year T rate is lower than the Fed Funds Rate), which is indicative of an impending recession. January 1960 is the base period; the interest rate spread is zero in January 1960.

### *Weather*

Weather is a critical factor determining the traveler volume. More rainy days during summer lead to fewer travelers to the state, while more snowy days during winter lead to more travelers.