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**TOURISM SPENDING IN MONROE COUNTY
REMAINS STEADY FOR 2008
TOURISM INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO BE A SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC
CONTRIBUTOR**

April 2, 2009... VisitRochester, Monroe County's official tourism promotion agency, announced today that the economic impact of visitors to Monroe County remained relatively strong for 2008 with a slight decrease of -0.2%. 2008 numbers indicate \$963.071 million in economic impact. That's a slight decline from the 2007 numbers of \$ 965.255 million.

VisitRochester identifies visitors as individuals who come from more than 50 miles to Monroe County for business, tourism, meetings, conventions and special sporting events.

The numbers, released by the New York State Department of Economic Development, Division of Tourism, are a continuation of the research originally commissioned by a coalition of New York State tourism partners in 2006. Using the same research firm, Tourism Economics, the state continues this research yearly. The report indicates that tourism expenditures throughout the state grew 4% in 2008 to \$53 billion. Still, that is a smaller percentage than the 9% growth seen in 2007.

According to the study, visitor driven expenditures in Monroe County in 2008 totaled \$963.071 million. That's a compilation of the following indicators: Lodging - \$258.479 million; Recreation - \$47.576 million; Food & Beverage - \$275.662 million; Retail - \$211.768 million; Transportation - \$164.992 million; and Second Homes/Vacation Rentals - \$4.594 million.

"These numbers are great news for our local economy and proves that tourism is an economic engine that has a major impact on the excellent quality of life that we all enjoy here in Monroe County," said Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks.

Research results indicated the tourism impact on Monroe County generated

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\$64.595 million in local and \$59.982 million in state taxes, for a total of \$124.577 million. Further, tourism-generated labor income was \$500.611 million, accounting for 13,934 direct tourism jobs. The total of direct, indirect and induced tourism jobs in Monroe County is 20,156.

In making the announcement, Ed Hall, president and CEO remarked, "While the first three quarters of '08 were good, Rochester's business related travel fell sharply in the last quarter, leading to the slight decline in overall visitor impact. However, we still led the Finger Lakes region with 37% of the region's visitor spending."

The Finger Lakes region is the fourth largest visitor spending tourism region in the state behind New York City, Long Island and Hudson Valley which make up 80% of the state's visitor spending. Tourism spending in the Finger Lakes was \$2.7 billion, with Monroe County representing 37% of the region's visitor spending.

Hall also mentioned that the study results reinforce the existing marketing efforts of VisitRochester both in and out of the region as it promotes the area as a place to visit, live, learn and do business. "We are very fortunate to have such a strong visitor industry here in Greater Rochester," he said, "despite our current economic conditions, we remain convinced that our product is an appealing and affordable destination for leisure and business travelers alike."

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