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An Economic Impact Analysis of a Youth Softball World Series

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The University of Southern Mississippi

An Economic Impact Analysis of a Youth Softball World Series

by

Robert Tanner Jones

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
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in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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Abstract

Sporting events can have a large impact on an economy. From the Olympics to the Super Bowl to the World Cup, these events bring in millions of dollars of new revenue to a region. Extensive research has been conducted on the economic impact of these mega-events. However, smaller sporting events, such as a fishing tournament, youth sports tournament, or 5K race, can also boost local economies and influence future tourism choices. However, limited research has been conducted to understand the economic impact of these events, despite the significant resources needed by communities to host these smaller events. This economic impact analysis study focuses on the estimated impact of hosting a smaller, annual sporting event, the 2013 Dixie Angels Softball World Series in Petal, Mississippi. The study determined that the regional hotel and restaurant industries benefited from the tourists attracted to the area by the event, but because the city lacks hotels and has limited restaurants, the county, rather than the city, received the majority of the economic benefit. In the future, other cities might consider their assets, before bidding to host similar events. These events can have an impact on a local economy, but the hospitality assets need to be in place.

Key Words: sporting events, tourism, sports, softball, economy, economic impact

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List of Abbreviations

EMSI – Economic Modeling Specialists International

NAICS – North American Industry Classification System

ROI – Return on Investment

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Each year, hundreds of communities invest thousands of their tax dollars in local events, festivals, and sports. These communities may use these occasions to boost community pride, promote tourism, or have a positive economic impact. However, for many communities, there is no clear reason for hosting a small festival, concert, or non-professional sports event, but, instead, these events are put on because someone just thought it was a great idea. On the other hand, there is no doubt that some cities have benefitted greatly from hosting sporting events and festivals. For example, the Olympics, Super Bowl, and World Cup are great events for cities to host, but no city puts up a bid for huge events like these unless they have done the research to determine the benefits of hosting such an event (Delpy, 1998). While some cities may not be prepared to host the Olympics, they do have the ability to host smaller events, ranging from golf tournaments to youth softball tournaments to small swim meets. However, the size of the event does not change the need to determine its significance and benefit to the community at hand. Few studies have been done to determine the economic impact of these smaller events, partially because the host communities do not have the resources needed to determine the economic impact. This study will focus on determining whether or not the impact of a typical small, non-professional sporting event is economically beneficial for a small, micropolitan city.

This study will examine the impact that a sporting event can bring to both its sponsors and its hosts. Most consumers can recognize the benefit that they have received after attending a sporting event, but the long-term economic benefits are rarely realized by those who do not attend the event or own a neighboring hotel or restaurant that would have an increase in revenues

as a result of the event. Sometimes, the initiators of the event do not even realize the impact of the event that they create. For example, consider the economic impact that a Southern Miss home football game can have on the Hattiesburg, Mississippi, area. The population of M. M. Roberts Stadium on a Saturday in October is only half that of Hattiesburg, but, often times, those outside of the stadium are blind to the fact that the game is adding to their tax benefits. A 2012 study, done by The University of Southern Mississippi Department of Economic Development, showed that an estimated 62% of all attendees were from out of town. With just one game, these attendees added approximately \$186,000 in new income to the local economy (USM-UAB, 2012). From sales-tax dollars to increases in local, small business profits, these attendees offer the citizens of Hattiesburg great monetary benefits. Not only are many of the local small business owners benefiting from the incoming revenue, but the number of local jobs should also see an increase. These benefits for the local economy help justify the high costs associated with building facilities, renovating facilities, and advertising the events.

After building a new youth baseball and softball complex, Petal, Mississippi, was given the honor of hosting the 2013 Dixie Youth Softball World Series for girls ages ten and under. While the event will cost the city \$40,000-\$45,000 initially, they hope that the impact on the local economy will outweigh those costs (Mlot, 2012). Not only will this event have an effect on the city of Petal, but it will also have an impact on the entire county, due to the amount of lodging, gasoline, and provisions required.

Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

Export base theory (economic base theory) provides a general framework for understanding a local economy and the total impacts of specific local changes in economic activity. In determining regional economic impact, it is important to understand the basis of

export base theory, as it relates to both long term and short term multiplier effects of dividing an industry into import and export categories. According to economic base theory, economies grow the enhancement of the basic sector, which are those sectors bringing new dollars into the community. Because of this claim, only dollars new to the community or leakages of spending from the event should be included in an economic impact analysis.

This theory does contain limitations in the area of determining the exact ratio of import to export industries, and, similarly problematic, McNulty (1977) states that few industries that can be classified as 100% import or export. In order to determine an exact ratio, Galambos and Schreiber (1978) affirm the difficulty of classifying each and every industry, by arguing that a precise determination would require contacting each employer involved. Despite the limitations of export base theory, it is the conceptual underpinning of economic impact analysis.

Statement of Problem

While many economic impact studies have been done on larger sporting events, few studies have been done on smaller events, like the Petal softball World Series. Hundreds of youth sports tournaments are hosted by smaller communities, each year, but rarely can economic motive be found to support the hosting of these tournaments. Many of these host-communities may not fully understand the economic implication, good or bad, of hosting such an event.

Purpose of the Study

Research Objective 1. - collect relevant data on the 2013 Dixie Youth Softball World Series, hosted by Petal, Mississippi.

Research Objective 2. - conduct an economic impact analysis, using the data collected during the tournament.

Research Objective 3. - develop a conclusion, with regards to the benefits and costs of hosting the World Series.

Considering this World Series will be the first of any kind to be hosted by the City of Petal, this is the only study to be done on such an event in the city. For Petal, their ability to determine the success or failure of the event, in comparison to their expectations, could prove valuable in determining whether or not the city should consider hosting similar events in the future. Because the city does not contain many restaurant options or any hotel options, the study could also point to the areas in which Petal needs to improve, as the city considers future development. Petal's urban neighbor, Hattiesburg, a city of just over 47,000 residents, contains over thirty hotel options for visitor, which averages to about one hotel per 1,500 residents (Hattiesburg, 2012). Petal, on the other hand, has a population of just over 10,000 residents and features no hotels (Petal, 2012). This difference of 8,500 residents, per hotel, is large and could have a great impact on the results of the study. Additionally, this study could be used by any other community that may be considering hosting a similar event or wanting for a hotel.

Research Question

Primary Research Question

1. From an economic perspective, is it beneficial for a small, micropolitan city, like Petal, Mississippi, to host a ten-team youth softball world series?

Secondary Research Question

2. Considering that there are no hotels, limited dining options, and limited retail options in Petal, Mississippi, will much of the economic impact of the World Series occur in the City of Petal?

Primary Research Hypothesis

1. The economic impact of the World Series does not sufficiently benefit small, micropolitan cities with limited hospitality assets.

Secondary Research Hypothesis

2. Most of the impact will be felt outside of Petal, due to the fact that there are no hotels, limited dining options, and limited retail options in Petal.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The number of factors that play into any economic impact analysis is large, and each of the analyses varies, depending on the subject matter. For this project, the focus will be on a few major factors, such as return on investment, the factors that influence the individuals, the factors that influence the event itself, and the centrality of the event. The importance of these factors, along with an understanding of the subject of economic impacts, can be found in the following chapter of this project.

First, this chapter will explain what an economic impact study is, how the study is done, and what is typically expected and determined when looking at study results. This section will include information on theory as well as examples from previous studies. The information provided in the first section will then be used to understand and interpret data that have been recorded as a result of studies of other sporting and community events similar to Petal's World Series. In the second section, the specific individual and event factors will be determined, as the Petal World Series is compared to other events, with an emphasis on economic impact studies. Once the factors are determined, this section will conclude by taking a look at situational constraints of prior event studies, as they compare to Petal's World Series.

Determining Economic Impact of Sporting Events

While many economic impact studies are conducted on large-scale, mainstream sporting events, such as the Super Bowl and the Olympics, not as many focus on the impact of smaller events in lesser-known markets. Studies can range from impact on specific industries, such as the hotel or restaurant industries, to impacts on the entire community. Daniels, Norman, and Henry

(2004), explain that many communities see sports tourism as a way to boost the local economy, proving the importance of economic impact studies to these areas. This broad area of potential study opens the door for many different researchable variables and many impact analysis studies that cover different types of events.

As expected, money is the main focus of most every economic impact analysis that is done, and that is what drives the demand for these studies. Weisbrod and Simmons define economic impact as any change in the flow of money (income) in the economy of a region, whether that is a flow of money between industry sectors, population groups, or local areas (2011). In this case, the information that follows assumes that definition's "change" to mean an event, and the "region" at hand is assumed to be the local economy. In the specific area of sporting events, the majority of the demand is for positive monetary economic impact to the local economy, and that impact is measured by the money that is spent by the attendees and participants associated with the event. Even with the aid of government and local sponsors, hosting a small or large sporting event can be extremely costly, and it is unlikely that a host would be willing to accommodate the event if they were not interested in some sort of benefit. Profits and monetary impact are very important, but not all events are created solely for monetary purposes. Some events, local or broad, are created to bring more awareness to the community in which it is located. For instance, if a community was attempting to increase its status as an attraction for tourists, they might host a regional youth soccer tournament, featuring teams from various cities and states, with hopes that the visitors would enjoy their stay. If the tournament was successful and the tourists enjoyed their stay, they would be likely to return to the area in the future. Additionally, Delpy (1998, 33) suggests that some event hosts are volunteers, interested in nothing but helping the community enjoy great sports, and much of the

cost may be eliminated by the number of volunteers utilized throughout the event. As society has progressed, more and more sport facilitating has been done on a volunteer basis in a diverse number of ways, such as schools, youth organization, and disabled organizations (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Even if the event is costly, the future economic impact and boost in morale could outweigh the present costs. Most event hosts would like a mix of immediate and future monetary impact, but there is no way of absolutely knowing, without putting on the event and studying the impact. Because so few publicized studies are done on small, local events, such as the Petal World Series, it will be necessary to look at a few studies on a larger scale and compare them to the study at hand.

Determining a Multiplier

If the creators of an event decide to move forward with hosting the event, the economic impact can be determined using data collected during the event. Once the data have been analyzed, the results can be compared to expectations, and the success or failure of the event can be determined. A more tangible and understandable approach to economic impact analysis has been derived by Crompton (1999), who uses the following formula to estimate visitor spending:

Visitor Impact Estimate

$$\text{Number of Visitors} \times \text{Average Spending per Visitor} \times \text{A Multiplier} = \text{Visitor Impact}$$

Figure 1. Visitor Impact Estimate (Crompton, 1999)

Crompton's formula requires the definition of a visitor, estimation of the number of visitors in the area, estimation of the average spending level of the visitors, and the effects of the monetary impact, applied via the multiplier. The ripple effect of the additional spending by businesses and individuals, as a result of the initial lump of expenditures makes the multiplier an important aspect of the impact study process (Crompton, 1999; Milburn, 2006). The multiplier varies from

project to project, and helps determine the ripple effect of the impact that is felt from an event (Crompton, 1999). The following chart shows an example of indirect impact and how individual expenditures might influence future economic activity:

Indirect Impact Flow-Chart

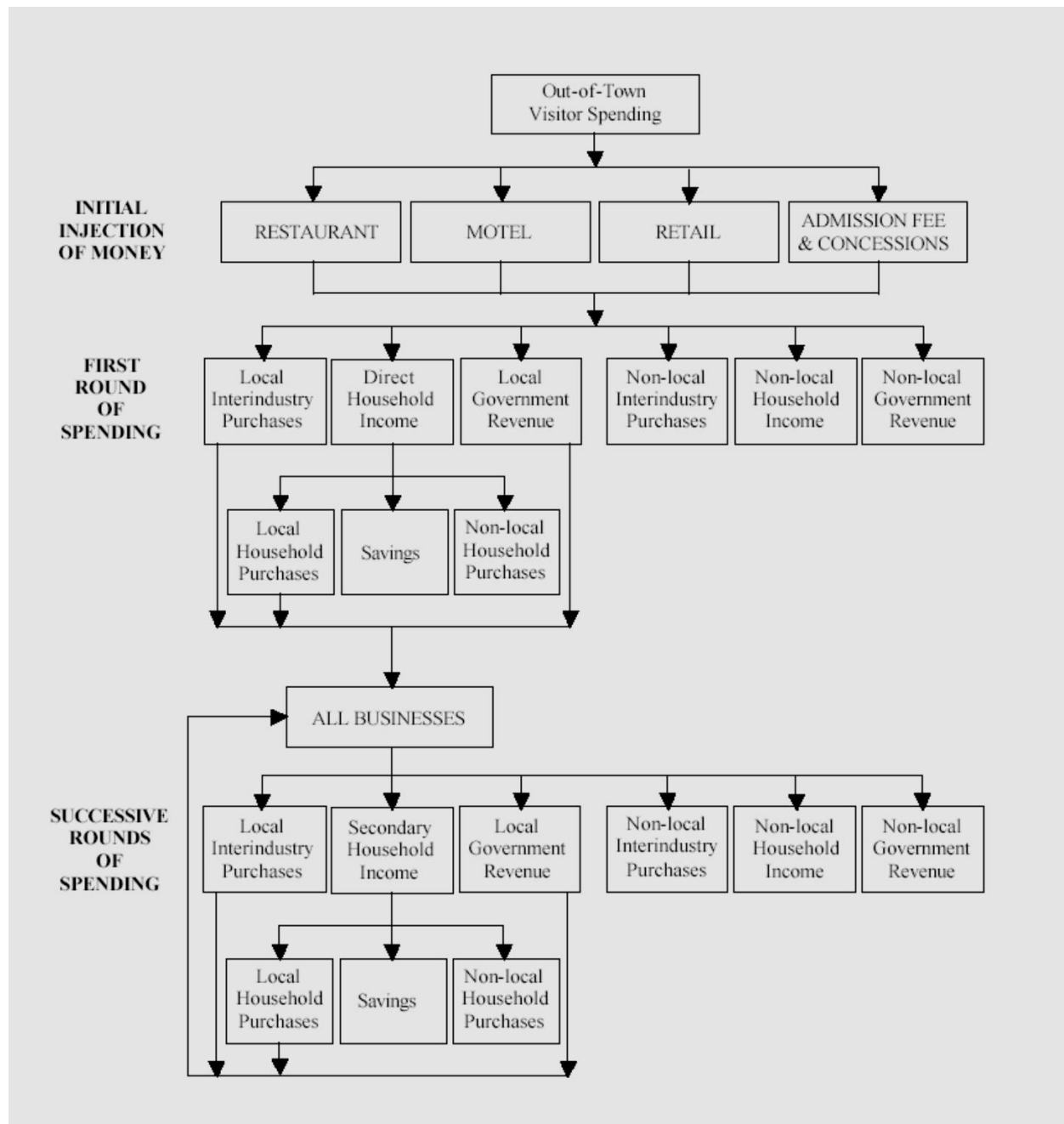


Figure 2. Indirect Impact (Milburn, 2006)

Because determination of multipliers is a tedious task that requires an expert economist, this project will utilize the Economic Modeling Specialist International (EMSI) software and databases to determine said multiplier. For instance, an Olympic-sized event would have a regional effect, while a youth soccer tournament may only affect the city and county, and an event requiring more lodging could have a larger long-term effect on jobs in that industry, while the same event may have little effect on the area sporting goods retailers. For instance, in a study on a youth softball and baseball tournament in Jonesboro, Arkansas, Behunin (2010) calculated the economic impact multiplier to be 1.88, in order to account for future impact of eighty-eight cents on every dollar spent during the tournament. This multiplier was calculated using the software of the Minnesota IMPLAN group. While results from IMPLAN may vary a bit from those of EMSI, the variation should be minimal.

Return on Investment

Return on Investment (ROI) is something that almost all entities consider in the process of decision making of any kind. In the case of an economic impact analysis, revenues and costs of the event-producing entity are not the only factors. The results of these investments can be seen through other economic activity in the near and distant future. The aforementioned Crompton references an investment in a new sports facility, noting that it would take residents of a particular city about 13 years to earn back their initial investment of \$24 million (p. 3). The income, even after 13 years, includes the revenue that impacts the local economy outside of the facility. While some areas may see these revenues accrue, others do not have the same amount of success. According to George Mason professor Margaret Daniels, “not all communities have an equal likelihood of successfully hosting such an event” (2007, p. 2). If the returns do not

outweigh the investment, regardless of the nature of the return, the entity would hesitate to invest in the project.

Sports Tourism

While few people would question the necessity of studies on the economy, it is important to understand why a study on a small-scale sporting event could prove valuable to a suburban municipality. A sudden, event-induced increase in the demand for local goods can have a large impact on an area, particularly if the area is interested in becoming more visitor-oriented in the future. Because sports facilities are typically supported by public investments, residents typically desire some sort of economic or lifestyle boost as a result, and, without economic impact studies, it is difficult to determine the actual economic success of the construction of a new facility. These facilities are often expensive to construct, magnifying the importance of their economic success, which can be realized in different ways (Hodur & Leistritz, 2006).

While the expenditures of event attendees are quite important, they are not the only sources of positive economic activity in sport tourism. The actual building of a new facility and the jobs created by the need for consistent maintenance and event security also have a positive impact on the local economy and employment numbers (Hodur & Leistritz, 2006). Some researchers even claim that community events can help alleviate social problems (Crompton, 1999; Milburn, 2006). However, with this study focusing on attendee expenditures, it is especially important to understand the issues that will be relevant to the study at hand. Hodur and Leistritz (2006) discuss the importance of selecting the correct study area, collecting the proper data, estimating direct and secondary economic impacts, and correctly interpreting the results. Determining where the majority of the event-associated spending will take place is greatly important in determining the secondary impact. In some cases, a broader region must be used, in

order to determine the impact of expenditures that may not fall directly in the location of the event, such as neighboring hotels and restaurants (Hodur & Leistritz, 2006). For example, Chhabra, Sills, and Cubbage (2003) used a ten-county region to study the four-day Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, in North Carolina, because the host county had very few hotels for the attendees to stay in, meaning that the impact would be felt across a larger region (Chhabra et al., 2003; Hodur & Leistritz, 2006). As for collecting proper data, some expenditures may vary from actuality, due to the respondent's need to estimate the future and recall past expenditures. Surveyors should also focus on selecting an appropriate sample size and determining proper attendance estimates. Although taking the proper steps can certainly aid in the accuracy of the study, some variations are unavoidable. Results may even vary from different studies on the same event, considering that the process is not perfect. (Crompton, 1999; Milburn, 2006) As for estimating impacts, the only data that should be included are the expenditures created solely because of the event, ignoring any expenses that would have occurred regardless. Expenditures must be classified in their respective sectors, in order to determine their proper input-output coefficients, according to the appropriate region (Hodur & Leistritz, 2006).

If the proper steps are taken, these impact studies can greatly aid in a city's decision to host different events. While the results may be difficult to compare, due to the uniqueness of each event and its respective location, government officials can still weigh their options and determine if the event was a success or failure, by their own standards or expectations. The immeasurable determinants of success, such as publicity and facility improvements, may cause an unprofitable event to still be thought of as successful, which is something that an economic impact study cannot decide for its interpreter (Hodur & Leistritz, 2006).

Event Factors

Spectators and participants, depending on the event, could be travelling from afar, or they could be local residents who are willing to spend a larger sum of their income on the local economy during a sporting event. When dealing with locals, most of the impact would likely be felt at the event itself, as they would not be forced to sway from their usual routine of dining, resting, and driving. (Crompton, 1999; Wilson, 2006) However, when dealing with attendees who have travelled from out of the area, the entire local economy would feel an impact, from the hotels and gas stations to the restaurants and retail stores. Wilson (2006) argues that an event that brings in outsiders would likely have a much larger impact on the local economy, which would increase the willingness of the local government to aid in financing the event. For instance, each January, Mobile, Alabama hosts the Senior Bowl football game. In 2007, this one event brought over 17,000 non-Alabama residents to Mobile, and the economic impact was determined to be between \$13 million and \$19 million (Keshock, 2009). In many cases, if the local government believes the event would be beneficial to the local economy, they may even be willing to take a loss on the project, for the sake of local business owners and future tax revenue (Delpy, 1998). In 2012, Baldwin County, in Alabama, saw a local impact of \$22.4 million that is mostly attributable to their hosting of sports tournaments and events.

Table 1

Baldwin County Tourism

Year	Number of Events	Room Nights Generated	Direct Visitor Spending
2012	88	64,076	\$22.4M
2011	69	48,655	\$16.3M
2010	68	38,142	\$12.8M
2009	51	23,193	\$7.6M
2008	28	10,081	\$3M

Source: (2012 Gulf Shores)

As evident by the chart above, visitor impact is up from only \$3 million in direct, sport-related visitor spending in 2008. While the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau did have to make investments in jobs, social media, and advertising, those investments have certainly paid off, as evident by the \$19.4 million increase in annual, sports-related, visitor spending, over a four year period (2012 Gulf Shores). Similarly, Loudoun County, in Virginia, began marketing their facilities to youth sports organizers approximately ten years ago and have seen a large increase in hotel occupancy. Most of these occupants have been associated with baseball and softball tournaments in the Loudoun area (Increasing).

Just as the individuals attending a sporting event vary from one event to the next, the events themselves are quite different as well. For instance, it would not be easy to compare the single-game Super Bowl to the two-week Olympic Games nor would it be easy to compare a high school basketball tournament to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament. Each event has its own characteristics, making it important to pinpoint the type of event that the analysis will be dealing with. These factors can include many things, such as length of event, number of individuals involved, reward offered, location, and exclusivity. However, a recent Iowa study determined that American families spent \$7 billion on youth sports in 2010, proving that these

events can have a large impact on an economy at the national and local level (Lipsman & Siegelman, 2012).

The number of teams involved in an event can greatly change the economic impact and the initial costs of putting on the tournament, much like the family-size aspect. For team sporting events, the size of the team could also influence the impact of the event. A basketball tournament featuring ten teams with ten players on each team would likely not have as large an impact as a softball tournament featuring fifteen teams with fifteen players on each team. The importance of utilizing the facilities to the maximum of their potential cannot be stressed enough, as the host of the event will want to fill every seat and field to which they have access.

In addition to the seats needing to be filled, the age of the consumers often influences the impact as well. When dealing with a youth sporting event, the restaurant industry would much rather serve a growing, hungry teenager than an eight year old who may qualify for a cheap or free kid's meal. Food and drink play a large role in the economic impact of most sporting events (Wilson, 2006). While it may appear to be a minor detail, these issues can have a huge impact on the profit of the restaurants in an area.

Exclusivity is yet another factor that can have an impact on the size of the event. For a popular, professional sporting event, tickets would not be easy to attain, making the event more exclusive to individuals or couples, but a local, amateur sports tournament would likely be an affair for the entire family. Another factor that has a large influence on the success of an event, particularly in suburban areas like Petal, is the event's location. In the case of a suburban host, much of the impact is directed back to the local urban area, as many hotels, restaurants, and other attractions may pull the economic impact to the larger city.

Individual Factors

In comparing the various aspects of an impact analysis study, there are many factors that are specific to the individual or group of individuals being studied. A few of these factors are distance travelled for event, size of party, household income, spending habits, and spending moods. When it comes to sporting events, one of the biggest influences on economic impact is the distance that the spectators and participants travel to and from the event. The hotel industry benefits greatly from a lengthy event that is a long distance from the home of the spectators and participants. If these individuals cannot easily commute from the event to their home, they are more likely to need accommodations for a longer period of time (Crompton, 1999; Wilson, 2006). Also, some people may be willing to use a sporting event as a vacation, ignoring the fact that they could travel to and from the event in a reasonable amount of time. Without the large mass of hotels and condominiums, the aforementioned Baldwin County would be an unlikely destination for a large softball tournament. Based on Wilson's (2006) ideas, areas where accommodations are not as readily available would not realize as large of an impact as in the aforementioned Baldwin County. Most of the 2012 direct visitor spending is attributable to hotel and condo rental, restaurants, and other entertainment, such as theme parks, concerts, and beach equipment rentals (Alabama, 2012). If the event consists mostly of locals, the hotel industry would see very little benefit.

Additionally, the local restaurants, gas stations, and retail outlets would receive a larger boost in sales if the event brought in a large number of travelers for a longer period of time. Wilson (2006) also supports the idea that a six day event designed around locals could have a larger impact than a one day event designed for a moderate number of travelers. Because there are so many factors in determining the impact, it is difficult to take any one factor and deem the

event a success or failure based solely on that factor. For instance, Wilson (2006), who analyzed four small swimming tournaments in the United Kingdom, focused a lot of the study on comparing the number of participants to the number of spectators. Although these events had more participants than spectators, there was still a positive impact on the small, local economy. In another instance, Margaret J. Daniels and William C. Norman (2003), also using the basis of participants versus spectators, determined that the impact on the local economy was much greater when the local consumers were a part of the audience. If there is a local interest, the spectator turnout tends to be much higher, bringing a more direct impact. However, a high number of outside participants can impact the economy in a way similar to that of the spectators. These numbers can vary from one study to the next, making each study and each individual even more important.

Two other individual-specific factors that can have a huge impact on a local economy are the size of the local and travelling families and household income. A family of five is likely to have a larger impact on the economy than a family of three, because they have two extra people that could potentially have an impact. The size of a party can be averaged across the results of the survey, as was done in Behunin's 2010 Jonesboro, Arkansas study. Household income would similarly influence the impact that a family has on the local economy. For example, a family of five with a household income of \$80,000 would likely spend less than a family of five with a household income of \$120,000, and a family of three with a household income of \$100,000 would likely spend less than a family of five with a household income of \$100,000. However, there may be no difference in the amount spent from family to family, as much of this data is influenced by the previously addressed event factors. While there are many other individual factors that could have an impact, such as moods and spending habits, these are some of the

factors that are easy to define and record, making them useful in most any economic impact analysis study of a sporting event.

Summary

The prior information displayed the importance of a number of factors on the economic impact of a sporting event, including event size, location, number of participants, number of spectators, length of event, and lodging availability. As can be expected, it is obvious that larger, longer events have larger impacts on local economies. However, there are many realizable benefits that may come as a result of hosting a smaller event, such as a regional softball tournament. The problem lies in the fact there are very few studies done on these smaller events, which makes it more difficult to define the benefits of hosting a smaller event. The next chapter of this study discusses how these factors and issues will be analyzed, with regard to this specific study and gives an example of how to study these small events.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

The goal of this project was to determine the economic impact of a youth softball world series on the local economy in a small, micropolitan, South Mississippi city. The impact was determined using the Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) software, and software inputs were determined using a short survey, which was distributed and collected during the event. Not only will the impact analysis aid in determining the success of the event, but it will also help local officials determine whether or not they might be interested in hosting the event again in the future. The researcher expects the event to have a minor impact on the local economy, which might discourage the local government from desiring to host the event again in the future. The study was conducted at this regional tournament, which was held in Petal, Mississippi for the first time, at the Robert E. Russell Complex.

Population and Sample

This project's data collection was completed during the actual tournament by conducting intercept surveys of attendees at the event using an established survey tool (see Appendix A for survey). The survey asked each participant to specify their home zip-code, in order to indicate their area of residence. Using Crompton's (1999) methods, any survey participants with a Petal zip code were excluded from final results. The goal was to survey as many qualifying attendees as possible. The survey was distributed face to face, by walking throughout the park and handing printouts to willing participants. An attempt was made to only approach individuals not watching their team of interest at that time, in order to best respect their motives for attending.

Surveys were given only to adults, ages eighteen and older. Most of the attendees were twenty to forty year old parents or fifty to seventy year old grandparents of the participating children, but there were a few variations. However, age is not the most relevant issue for this particular study, as an economic impact can be made by a person of any age. The survey participants were asked to account for the spending made by or on account of their children or any member of their group under the age of eighteen, in order to include the impact of the younger attendees and participants.

Subjects were surveyed randomly from the crowd at and around the various games being played. However, an attempt was made to get a sample from each team, each of which represented a different state. Each survey prompted the attendee to discard the survey if they had already completed the form, in order to avoid any duplication. People of all races and genders were surveyed, but gender and race are not very important in this study, as money spent does not specifically tie in to either category. Subjects were informed of the purpose of the research, the amount of time required to complete the survey, their right to decline participation, confidentiality and disposition of data associated to them, and the fact that this project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee. Due to the brevity and simplicity of the survey, completion rarely required more than five minutes of the participant's time. Explanation of the purposes of the survey often required more time than the actual completion. Anyone who desired to be excluded from taking the survey was still included in the attendance count of the event, which has been factored into the project. The researcher was accessible throughout the process of surveying, allowing the participants to ask any questions about the specificity of survey questions or any other concerns they may have.

The number of samples collected was determined by the number of attendees present at the event, which could not be accurately anticipated. Because the expenditures of the children participating in the event were likely provided by their guardians, individuals were asked to account for any expenditures that were associated with their group, with group being defined to include any individual that the survey participant was fiscally responsible for during the event. By using groups, the survey could include the impact of the players, as well as the surveyed spectators. In preparation for the survey, it was anticipated that each team member would have approximately 1.5 groups associated with them, considering grandparents and parents might split into separate spending groups. This number was determined from an estimated attendance number, given during a discussion with a representative of the Petal Chamber of Commerce, who was assisting with the event (Wilson, 2013). With twelve players on each of the ten teams and an estimated 1.5 groups per player, a sample size of 50-70 groups was the approximate goal, which would represent a broad enough sample of the estimated 180 groups in attendance. Again, these numbers are only estimates, and true attendance could not be obtained prior to the event. Gate admission was required each day, and not all teams played on the same days, which would have skewed any gate admission attendance numbers. Additionally, gate admission did not include coaches and players, who arrived at the facilities before the majority of the attendees. In order to get a better estimate of attendance, a head count was done of each team's audience during their first game of the tournament. Of course, the attendance numbers were still an approximation, but the likelihood that any group associated with a player would be watching that player was extremely high.

Data Collection

Most elements of the survey were pulled from other economic impact surveys, in order to insure comparable statistics. The bulk of the survey was based on a survey used by The University of Southern Mississippi's Trent Lott National Center for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship to determine the economic impact of the Art in the Pass arts festival, in Pass Christian Mississippi (Arts, 2013). The survey contained various questions that were used to determine the impact of each individual or family that visited the area because of the event (see Appendix). As was previously stated, survey participants were asked to specify their home zip code, in order to insure that no Petal area residents were included in the new impact information. Participants were asked to specify the number of individuals who were financially dependent on them for the duration of the tournament, in order to determine an average group size. Other questions concerning gender, age, and regional familiarity were also included in the survey, and, while these data may not be extremely useful for the determination of the economic impact, they could be useful in determining the anticipated makeup of future spectators and participants of similar softball tournaments, which could aid in advertising and promotion of future events.

For the purposes of this survey, the most important information collected via the survey was the estimation of monetary expenditures on the part of the groups. Each category under the spending question was linked to a specific industry in the EMSI software, which is given a North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) code. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, these codes are the standard used by federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy (2014). The chart below shows the NAICS codes that are attached to the various expenditure categories on the survey.

Table 2

NAICS Codes

NAICS Category	Survey Category
Commercial Laundry, Drycleaning, and Pressing Machine Manufacturing (333312)	\$ for Laundry
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores (447110)	\$ for Transportation
Sporting Goods Stores (451110)	\$ for Sports Equipment
Gift, Novelty, and Souvenir Stores (453220)	\$ for Souvenirs
All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries (713990)	\$ for Recreation
Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels (721110)	\$ for Lodging
Full and Limited Service Restaurants (722110/722211)	\$ for Food and Drink
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals (903999)	\$ for Admission
All Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers (except Tobacco Stores) (453998)	\$ for Other

Source: EMSI

These codes determined the appropriate multiplier for whatever number was entered for total expenditures, according to the predetermined Forrest County expectations. The EMSI software only has multipliers at the county and state level so the model was run for Forrest County. While this may skew the results of Petal's impact by a small amount, it likely offered a more accurate depiction of total impact, considering the likelihood that some of the impact was actually felt in other areas of Forrest County. Questions provided data to determine how much money was spent on a variety of goods and service, such as lodging, food, and travel. While some of the survey questions were open-ended, each was quantifiable, making the data easier to collect and enter into the analysis software. There were no expected benefits or risks, with respect to the completion of the survey and being a part of this research process. A benefit could be realized by the city of Petal and the surrounding areas, as the results could be used to determine the economic value that was created by the tournament. This potential benefit was made clear to the

subject, to justify participation. No known risks were associated with the completion of the survey.

The subject was informed that, upon completion of the survey, any questions about the survey or their information should be directed toward the surveyor, Robert Tanner Jones. There was nothing to associate the subject with the survey, aside from the information that they provided. No names were with the survey, but the zip code question was utilized, in order to group the subjects by original area of residence. Because no name was asked, subject confidentiality is easily attained. All surveys will be kept by the researcher and will be shredded upon completion of their use. An informed consent form was attached.

As is the case with any survey, the main limit of this survey lies in its possible variations of distribution, due to the number of people to be surveyed. Additionally, some impact may have gone unrecorded or overestimated, due to failure to provide completed information on the part of the participant, considering that some expenditures may have been estimated by the participant. Other issues may have been found in misinterpretation of the survey or improper estimates of multipliers, but all possible actions were taken to minimize these risks and limitations.

Data Analysis

Most economic impact studies are done using an economic assessment software package, which is why this study utilized the Economic Modeling Specialist International software. Before entering the data into the EMSI software, the survey results were analyzed, according to attendance numbers. An estimated number of total groups and attendees was determined, and an average expenditure (per group and per attendee) was determined for each of the spending categories. For each category, the average expenditure per group was multiplied by the estimated

number of groups, which resulted in an estimated total amount spent in each category, for the duration of the tournament, by all attendees. The analyzed monetary data collected from the surveys was input into the software, according to the appropriate NAICS code. The program determined an approximate monetary impact on the area, as well as the estimated number of jobs created by the event. The use of this program will help solidify the study's legitimacy, considering that the program is used for many large-scale impact studies. As was previously stated, Petal is contained within the Forrest County region, which requires the impact to be viewed on a county-wide scale, as opposed to a city-wide scale. Once the data was entered, the determination of total economic impact and number of jobs created allowed for the comparison of these results to results derived from other, similar events.

Summary

The actual success of the softball tournament may not be determined until city officials react to the results of this study. Considering that the City of Petal spent an approximate \$40-45,000 on the tournament, the determined economic impact will likely be compared to those expenditures by city officials (Mlot, 2012). If they believe that the investment paid off for the city and its residents, the tournament will be deemed a successful event for the City of Petal. As for answering the research questions, the data provided by the analysis shows the impact of the tournament and has been interpreted to show the economic benefits of Petal hosting a ten-team youth softball world series. The hotel-specific data has been compared to the impact of the entire event, in order to show the portion of the impact that is attributable to the hotel industry.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

This study observes the economic benefits, or lack thereof, stemming from the city of Petal, Mississippi, hosting a ten-team youth softball tournament, featuring teams from various states in the Southeastern United States. This chapter will feature the results of the survey, as well as the results of the input/output scenarios that were created using the obtained survey data. The results will be summarized at the end of the chapter.

Statistical Analysis

The results retrieved from the distributed survey focused on the determination of money spent in Forrest County in South Mississippi, throughout the softball World Series. The results allowed for the determination of the economic boost that was realized by the entire county, as a product of the tournament and its attendees, which will directly impact the answer to the study's primary question. The secondary question was analyzed using data specific to the hotel industry, as compared to the economic impact throughout all industries. As a reminder, the research questions are listed below:

Primary Research Question

1. From an economic perspective, is it beneficial for a small, micropolitan city, like Petal, Mississippi, to host a ten-team youth softball world series?

Secondary Research Question

2. Considering that there are no hotels, limited dining options, and limited retail options in Petal, Mississippi, will much of the economic impact of the World Series occur in the City of Petal?

Because the survey was directed towards “groups” of individuals, estimating attendance was the first step in determining the overall expenditures of those in attendance. During the first day of the World Series, a head count resulted in an estimated attendance of 589 individuals who did not appear to be associated with the home-town, Petal team. The attendees who appeared to be associated with Petal were not included in the head count, due to the fact that they did not likely bring any new, unexpected revenue to the Forrest County area. Each team and their fans were fairly easily identifiable by their team colors and location in the ballpark, as most attendees sat nearest to their team’s bench. Each individual surveyed was asked to include the number of individuals that they were financially responsible for (during the tournament), and this number was considered to be the size of their “group.” Based on the results of the surveys, the average group size was approximately 3.58, with an average of approximately 2.17 of those individuals being female and 1.41 of those individuals being male. Ten teams participated in the tournament (excluding the local team) and consisted of twelve players per team. A higher than expected number of participants had both parents and grandparents in attendance at the tournament, which, of course, drove the attendance total up. In order to predict an approximate number of completed surveys needed, I calculated an attendance estimate by approximating that each of the 120 players had 1.5 groups associated with their participation, meaning that about 180 groups were in attendance at some point throughout the tournament. If each of the 180 groups consisted of an average of 3.58 individuals, the total attendance would be approximately 643 people, which is only 54 more than the head count. Considering that some individuals probably came to the tournament before and after the head count, an approximate group total of 180 was used to determine the results of expenditures in each category.

For each of the expenditure categories in the chart below, the product of the average expenditure per group and the total number of groups (180) is determined to be the total amount spent by the entirety of those in attendance.

Table 3

Total Expenditures by Attendees

Survey Category	NAICS Code	Average Expenditure per Group	Total Number of Groups in Attendance	Total Expenditures of All Groups
\$ for Transportation	447110	232.29	180	41811.86
\$ for Admission	903999	34.07	180	6132.20
\$ for Food and Drink	722110	218.73	180	39371.19
\$ for Lodging	721110	356.12	180	64101.36
\$ for Laundry	333312	9.32	180	1677.97
\$ for Sports Equipment	451110	12.63	180	2272.88
\$ for Recreation	713990	57.03	180	10266.10
\$ for Souvenirs	453220	50.85	180	9152.54
\$ for Other	453998	112.03	180	20166.10

While the above chart gives specific numerical data, the graph below displays the expenditures, in comparison to one another.

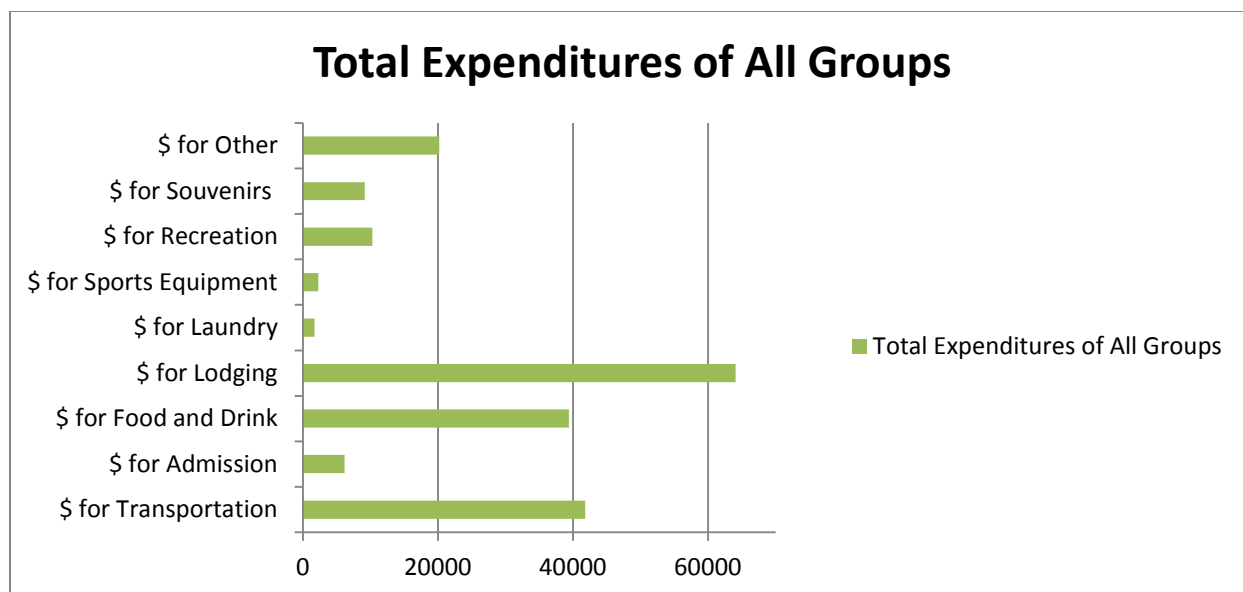


Figure 3.

As would be expected, most of the expenditures were realized in the Lodging, Food and Drink, and Transportation areas. On the other hand, only a small amount of the attendees' expenditures fell into the Sports Equipment and Laundry categories.

In order to determine the event's actual effect on the Forrest County economy, the data were entered into the Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) software. The program features area-specific data that allows a closer look at an approximate increase in earnings and jobs created, as a result of the softball tournament. The EMSI, industry-specific categories and numbers, previously shown in Table 2, were used to cover the categories of spending. Admission, which was \$15 for the entire week, was paid at the gate of the ballpark and was operated by the city of Petal's Parks and Recreation Department. As a result, these expenditures were classified as being paid to the local government, while on the survey they were classified as admission expenses. The "other" spending category was input as other retailers, considering the likelihood that a majority of the "other" expenditures would likely fall into some retail category.

The following chart displays the actual impact on the individual industries, after using the data in the EMSI software:

Table 4

Industry Impacts

EMSI Classification	Survey Classification	Change in Earnings	Change in Jobs¹
Commercial Laundry, Drycleaning, and Pressing Machine Manufacturing (333312)	\$ for Laundry	\$548	0
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores (447110)	\$ for Transportation	\$22,017	1
Sporting Goods Stores (451110)	\$ for Sports Equipment	\$1,194	0
Gift, Novelty, and Souvenir Stores (453220)	\$ for Souvenirs	\$4,810	0
All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries (713990)	\$ for Recreation	\$5,219	0
Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels (721110)	\$ for Lodging	\$25,173	1
Full-Service Restaurants (722110)	\$ for Food and Drink	\$17,648	1
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals (903999)	\$ for Admission	\$4,233	0
All Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers (except	\$ for Other	\$10,601	0

¹ Because a non-recurring event, such as this one, is unlikely to sustain five entire jobs beyond the length of the event, the “change in jobs” is likely attributable to an increase in hours worked by current employees (Crompton, 2001).

Tobacco Stores) (453998)			
Aggregate		\$91,443	5 ²

While the expenditure category in the “Total Expenditures by Attendees” table includes any money that was estimated to have been spent during the tournament, the change in earnings in the “Industry Impacts” table is the actual change that will be recognized by the local economy, accounting for the portion of total expenditures that will escape the area economy. As was the case with the direct expenditures, the change in earnings was the highest in the transportation, lodging, and dining areas, although the gap between the lodging and other expenses was much tighter in the change in earnings. Each of those three industries saw an estimated increase of one job each. However, the average salaries of these jobs were only approximately \$19,958 each, which is only \$168 above the 2014 poverty line for a family of three (2014 Poverty). Of the specified industries, the commercial laundry and sporting goods industries saw the smallest impact from the event. Total, the event brought about the equivalent of five jobs and \$91,443 of new earnings to the Forrest County region. The two additional aggregate jobs can be attributed to miscellaneous industries, as no other industry-specific jobs were determined to have been created.

Considering that Petal has no hotel or comparable lodging, any change in jobs or earnings in the Hotel/Motel industry would have no direct effect on local businesses. Because of the absence of a hotel, Petal actually gave up over 27% of the total change in earnings, which could easily be the difference between the deemed success or failure of an event such as this World Series.

² This number includes the 3 jobs in the table and small parts of other jobs in the local economy.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will summarize the entire project before coming to a conclusion, based on the data that was analyzed previously, in Chapter 4. The chapter will then display any significant potential implications and opportunities for future research, stemming from the project at hand.

Summary

After reviewing the literature, it was clear sports tourism is a popular and, at times, successful way to boost local economic activity. Not only does the construction of a new facility employ workers for a short time, but the facility's maintenance and event staff positions add even more jobs to the local economy. Additionally, individual events can have an impact on the area, as a result of attendee and participant spending, which is the focus of this study (Hodur & Leistritz, 2006). Based on the potential impact of this event, the question at hand remains relevant:

Primary Research Question

1. From an economic perspective, is it beneficial for a small, micropolitan city, like Petal, Mississippi, to host a ten-team youth softball world series? Additionally, because Petal, Mississippi, lacks any sort of hotel or motel, the city officials would likely be interested in the impact that they might have lost as a result of this absence of lodging, making our secondary question relevant as well:

Secondary Research Question

2. Considering that there are no hotels, limited dining options, and limited retail options in Petal, Mississippi, will much of the economic impact of the World Series occur in the City of Petal?

After surveying 59 of an estimated 180 groups in attendance, survey results were totaled and entered into the EMSI software, allowing for the determination of appropriate multipliers. After calculating the change in earnings and jobs, the aggregate impact was estimated at \$91,433 which would support 5 jobs across all industries over one year. However, the amount of that impact that landed in Petal, MS is unlikely to be so high, due to the lack of hotel, restaurant, and retail options in the host city.

Findings and Conclusion

Because each location and event varies, there is a difficulty in comparing one event-related impact to another. Additionally, very few studies have been done on events similar to the Petal softball World Series, which only adds to the difficulty of comparing and contrasting. However, based on the fact that the city constructed their new baseball/softball complex without any concrete plans to host this event or any other, the likelihood that they are expecting a large economic boost from the facilities is low. Based on the literature, many municipalities build these types of facilities for the purpose of increasing the city's image and resident morale (Hodur & Leistriz, 2006; Delpy, 1998).

While there was certainly an increase in earnings throughout Forrest County, there is no reason to assume that a majority of this impact was actually central to Petal. Had there been lodging in the city, the situation may have been quite different. However, if a family is going to be staying in an urban area, they are much more likely to spend time there than in a residential

community that does not have a mall, movie theater, or even a fraction of the urban restaurants.

Based on these facts, previous studies, and interpretation of the data, the primary research hypothesis holds true, with respect to this particular study:

Primary Research Hypothesis

1. The economic impact of the World Series does not sufficiently benefit small, micropolitan cities.

Petal, Mississippi is not a true tourist attraction, and, even if the city contained multiple hotels, investments in small events do not bring about large economic benefits to similar areas. Much of the economic benefit falls into the lap of the urban neighbor, without any investment on the part of said neighbor.

The only true benefits of hosting such an event lie in the potential boost of resident morale, particularly due to the fact that a local team is guaranteed a spot in most tournaments of this kind. Residents enjoy having events to call their own and seeing their city represented in news coverage of such events. In the case of Petal, an annual festival would likely bring more benefit to the residents than a softball tournament in which fewer residents have a vested interest.

As for Petal's lack of lodging accommodation, the issue did not play as large of a role in the ultimate outcome of the study as originally predicted in the following hypothesis:

Secondary Research Hypothesis

2. Most of the impact will be felt outside of Petal, due to the fact that there are no hotels, limited dining options, and limited retail options in Petal.

In the end, most of the impact will be felt outside of Petal due to the fact that Petal does not have the traditional urban offerings in retail, hotel, and entertainment. This issue is not solely attributable to the lack of hotels, although it does play some role in loss of impact. "Most" would

indicate over 50% of the impact, and only 27% of the impact was actually attributable to the hotel/motel industry.

Implications

Considering that few studies have been done on these small events, the results of this study can be valuable in determining the future role of small, micropolitan areas as hosts for events. Based on the results of the study, the largest economic booster came as a result of the hotel/motel industry, which is lacking in many of these areas. The city of Petal and cities of similar makeup should consider lobbying for a hotel chain to join their community. The attendees and participants of an event like this world series could likely be housed under one, single hotel and would greatly increase the tax revenues and secondary impact of such an event.

If bringing in a hotel is not an option, these cities should consider hosting in-state tournaments that do not require lodging but may require a visitor to spend a majority of the day in their city. Most small, micropolitan cities feature restaurants and gas stations, as well as some other retail stores, which would encompass almost all of the non-hotel related expenditures covered in this study. The biggest factor is being able to keep the visitors in your area, in order to contain their spending and receive the impact of their stay.

On the other end of the spectrum, larger, urban cities might see these results as an easy opportunity to bring people to their area. Hosting this type of event would not likely require as large of an investment by a larger city, considering that they might already have facilities and volunteers ready to be utilized. Also, it would be unlikely that much of the aggregate impact would fall anywhere outside of the city's area, considering most options for dining, lodging, and recreation would be found within the area. The event may not be as important or unusual to an

urban area, but the payoff could be well worth it, particularly if it helps avoid stagnant, underutilized facilities.

Future Research

In the future, the researcher could study tournaments of similar size and location and determine the impact on their respective host cities. Additionally, a study could be done of similar size events that are hosted in a more urban setting, allowing for a better contrast of results. It would also be interesting to observe any shift in the pre-determined opinions of potential hosts for similar events, by showing those hosts the results of this study. Considering how few studies have been done on these smaller events, completing more studies would certainly contribute to the knowledge in this particular area of research. Furthermore, in order to maximize this study's value to the City of Petal, a financial analysis could be done of the city's tax revenues during the time of the tournament. In comparing the 2013 numbers to those of past years, the city could weigh the benefits of their \$40,000 investment.

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Appendix A

Survey

Your participation is requested in a research project determining the local economic impact of the softball tournament, which you are currently attending. Using the following short survey, data will be gathered during the tournament and later analyzed, using a computer program. The analyzed data will then be interpreted to determine the impact on the local economy.

With the results of the analyzed data, the local officials will be able to determine the economic benefits of hosting this tournament and whether they would be interested in seeing similar events come to this area in future. The survey should take no longer than two to three minutes to complete, and your participation is strictly voluntary and can be discontinued at any time.

After analyzing the data, the surveys will be disposed of by me, Robert Tanner Jones. Any specific entries linking you to the data collected will be kept confidential, until its eventual disposition and randomization.

If there are any questions regarding the survey, please ask. Any questions about the survey or the research project that may arise at a later date should be directed to me, Robert Tanner Jones, via phone at the following number: (601) 436-0187. Thank you for your cooperation. Please sign below, signifying your consent:

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

1. Including yourself, how many people are you monetarily providing for during this tournament?

___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___other (please provide number)

2. What does your group consist of?

___family only ___friends only ___family and friends _____other

3. What is your home zip code? _____

4. What is the sex of the members of your group?

Number of males____ Number of females____

5. What are the ages of the people in your group?

Please provide the number that fall into each category:

___ 1-10 ___ 11-20 ___ 21-30 ___ 31-40 ___ 41 and over

6. Will you be spending the night away from home because of this event?

___yes ___no

If no, continue to question 7.

If yes, are you staying:

___at a hotel ___with friends or relatives ___other

7. Attendance (please select the appropriate response(s))

___first time visiting the area ___visited area before

___first time to attend this event ___attended this event last year in different location

8. Please estimate how much you and the group you monetarily support will spend on each of the following, in this geographical area, as a result of your attending this event:

Transportation (gas, vehicle repairs, vehicle rental) \$_____

Admission and Parking \$_____

Food & Drink \$_____

Lodging \$_____

Laundry Services \$_____

Sports equipment \$_____

Recreation (other entertainment) \$_____

Souvenirs \$_____

All other spending \$_____

9. What is your last grade of school completed?

___grade school ___high school ___college

Appendix B



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

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Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **13072301**

PROJECT TITLE: **An Economic Impact Analysis of a Youth Softball World Series**

PROJECT TYPE: **Thesis**

RESEARCHER(S): **Robert Tanner Jones**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Business**

DEPARTMENT: **Economic Development**

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: **N/A**

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **07/30/2013 to 07/29/2014**

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board