

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon  
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**MEDIA RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: May 18, 2018****Contact: Matthew Holt, Freeholder Director**  
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## **Report: Tourism Spending Tops \$300 Million In Hunterdon County “Just The Tip Of The Iceberg”**

Visitors to Hunterdon County spent \$317 million on tourism goods and services in 2016, a record amount of total tourism related receipts in the County, according to the Tourism Impact Study performed by the Lloyd Levinson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality, and Tourism at Stockton University that was presented to the Hunterdon County Freeholder Board on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Freeholder Board Director Matt Holt said, “The impact study report is positive and heartening news about tourism as an economic driver in the county and, most importantly, demonstrates that it is just the tip of the iceberg. There is tremendous room to grow the tourism element of the local economy.”

Dr. Brian Tyrrell, Associate Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Stockton University, presented to the Freeholders the first phase of the three phase Tourism Study being conducted by the Levinson Institute, as part of the County’s Economic Development strategy.

The Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce and the Delaware River Towns Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau are partners with the County in the Tourism Study that is funded by a grant from the New Jersey Highlands Council.

Dr. Tyrrell told the Freeholders, “Hunterdon County visitors spent \$317 million on tourism goods and services in 2016, a new record for tourism spending in the county. That included \$81.4 million in expenditures on food and beverage, the largest portion of tourism spending in Hunterdon County at 26%. That was followed closely by spending in the transportation sector at \$81.3 million (26%), shopping (\$66.6 million or 21%), and traveler accommodations (\$36.8 million or 11%). Growth has been particularly pronounced in the spring and summer months.

There were an estimated 2,865 individuals employed in the tourism industry in Hunterdon County during 2016. Hunterdon County tourism employment has been very stable over the past eight years, showing modest growth during the period. 2016 is the most recent year for which data is available.”

2016 was the seventh consecutive year of rising tourism spending in Hunterdon.

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Hunterdon County Economic Development Director Marc Saluk reported, "The County initiated a three phase Tourism Study to learn more about the real impact and viability of tourism locally and to determine a methodology for creating a sustainable effort to maximize Tourism economic development.

Phase two of the study, an extensive effort to build a profile of the Hunterdon visitor and learn more about their patterns once in the county, has begun and will be conducted during the visitor season, from April through October.

And finally, phase three will be recommendations for an approach to creating sustainable and productive county wide tourism initiatives."

Phase 1 of the study is available on the County website at: <http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/planning.htm>