

Mike Litman-Financial Impacts on the Community From Visitors.

Financial Info on Visitor Impact: 911 Calls/police/fire; hospitals; lack of garbage pick-up cans/ recycling containers (more cans - more service) /sewage/fire/EMT; Housing Availability (rentals?); bathrooms; services (like food service); Sales tax revenue; gross sales revenues (Community Issues D)

Mike: To find out financial information on 911 calls, I talked to the police. As far as separating out there visitor 911 calls compared to resident 911 calls, they are unwilling to do that

Mike read a memo from the chief of police to John Stein, which said the people who visit Sitka in the summer have a definite impact on the workload of emergency workers. Case statistics show that June, July, and August are the busiest months of the year. In 2004 calls for service were 27 percent higher during those months, than the rest of the year. Police are busier in the summer because of many factors, including increased tourism. They don't have any exact figures about the costs to Sitka. There is a memo from John Stein relating to budget estimates, with an estimated cost of services to tour ship visitors. In 2005, for 230,000 visitors the labor costs were conservatively calculated at \$137,000.

Q: So that was for 2005?

Mike: Right, these are estimated numbers. There is no cost information for police.

Mike: Now, next on the list is fire. I talked to the fire department and they gave me numbers for 2002, 2004, and 2005. There were 996 EMS calls for the entire year of 2005; 39 were cruise ship related. These calls would be when they have a problem on board, and a person needs to be taken off the ship and brought to the hospital for a serious problem. What is interesting is that there is about \$220,000 worth of EMS Fire related calls per year to the tourists. They get about 90 percent back of what they bill out.

Q: So, if they bill out \$220,000, and recover 90 percent of that, they would actually make money off those calls, correct? What I am saying is that they are not actually losing money.

Mike: They just gave me an average price per call.

SH: Even though they recover 90 percent of the money, that ten percent doesn't represent a cost to them, and they are still probably coming out ahead. It is probably not a loss to them, and what you are presenting is the cost of the visitors.

Mike, Yes they bill out on average \$220,000 per year, how much of that accounts for an actual loss I don't know.

Lucy has some financial information on the hospitals.

Lucy: I called Sitka Community Hospital and he said that from May of 2005 to May of 2006, the hospital took care of 797 out of area patients, which equated to 7.57% of there business, and accounted for \$937,000 of patient revenue. They don't have the specifics broken out, but if we wanted it we could probably get it. The hospital said they do not feel overburdened by tourists, and welcome any additional business. SEARCH said that they seldom have visitors show up from out of town, and the only time is when Sitka Community Hospital was full, and couldn't cover it. Sitka Community Hospital has a map on the wall, showing where people have come from that they have served. As far as getting specifics for cruise, ferries, etc. they don't have that.

Q: Do they have the numbers of the tourist season compared to the rest of the year?

Lucy: This is just by year, not really by tourist season.

Mike: The next thing to discuss is garbage and waste service. There are 35 blue cans around town; each has a monthly charge of \$15. They usually pick up cans on a weekly basis, and there is still a landfill charge on top of that. There are six, 90gallon cans at the lightering docks seasonally. This is about \$85 a month for the pickup plus the landfill charge.

Q: Are those containers not there in the wintertime?

Mike: They remove them when it is not tourist season. I asked them for a break down, but they had no idea what the breakdown was as far as the frequency of use.

Q: The city pays for the blue cans?

Mike: Yes, and kind of relating to Floyd's information the harbors; in June there were 149 extra pickups of garbage at the harbor, and 56 extra pickups in April. April would be representative of the herring fishery. Moorage fees, etc. would cover this cost; even so 149 extra 350-gallon tubs is a lot of garbage.

SH: The city doesn't cover this cost; it is paid for by the harbors through moorage fees.

Mike: I don't know about the lightering fees and what those include.

SH: The city makes the money by charging for other things, and recouping that cost.

SH: Summers are always busier, and it might not be just visitors. I don't think the garbage situation is just visitors. I think there is a lot of local use in the summer also; for example, people doing maintenance on their boats after winter. . Summer is busier for everyone.

Mike: The next issue is recycling containers, obtaining more cans and more service. There are no extra cans anywhere, and the city doesn't see a need for it. The people I talked to don't think that the cruise people use the recycling canisters very much. They are going to come up with a three-fold brochure to educate people about the recycling facility.

SH: Was the original question about if we need to have recycling at other places where people don't have transportation?

Mike: I don't know, from what I learned they do not see a need for more recycling at lightering docks or other areas. Personally I would love to see more recycling canisters everywhere, but they were not aware of that need.

SH: Some of that ends up in the businesses in there own recycling canisters.

Mike: The next thing would be sewage. Sewage has been addressed somewhat as far as the bathrooms that are available. There are three public restrooms, and between May and September there operating costs were \$1780. That is the total cost for maintaining them, and there is basically just seasonal use.

Q: Is labor included in that?

Mike: I would assume so, it says all operating costs. The estimated costs of services to tourists for processing sewage and wastewater are \$75,000.

SH: On the subject of sewage, is there any figure from the treatment plant about volume per day?

Mike: I didn't look at that.

SC: You can't run enough tourists through Sitka to make any difference in the water compared to the rainfall; rainfall is more of an impact.