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**ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GETTYSBURG TOURISM ON THE RISE**

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In a summer when all eyes are on the economy and high gasoline prices, travel destinations across the country are suffering the effects of low consumer confidence with reduced visitation and decreased spending.

Gettysburg, however, has increased visitation this year with the help of a new museum, a series of large events and targeted marketing to the Mid-Atlantic region. While spending habits might be changing, in May and June, hotel occupancy in Gettysburg increased 11 percent over 2007, according to Smith Travel Research. Hotel occupancy in 2008 is up nearly 13 percent over the previous year.

The opening of the new Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center in April kicked off an early travel season for tens of thousands of visitors. The museum gave even the most frequent visitors a reason to come back to Gettysburg and see the 139,000-square-foot facility. Since then, the museum has attracted visitors from all over the world.

"The new Museum and Visitor Center was a great way to kick off the travel season this year," said Norris Flowers, President of the Gettysburg Convention & Visitors Bureau. "This museum will be a popular attraction for many years to come."

Many of Gettysburg's annual events helped boost visitation throughout the early summer.

The Gettysburg Festival alone brought nearly 16,000 people to the Gettysburg and Adams County area for 10 days of art, music, dance and entertainment in its inaugural year. The 145th Anniversary Battle of Gettysburg Reenactment brought close to 45,000 visitors and re-enactors for three days of living history. And Gettysburg Bike Week attracted more than 25,000 to this year's event.

Gettysburg and Adams County also attracted an increased number of meetings and conferences this year.

In an effort to maintain visitation in a lackluster economy during the last couple months of summer, the Gettysburg Convention & Visitors Bureau is stepping up its marketing and advertising spending in key areas of the Mid-Atlantic Region - Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

"For many residents of Washington and Baltimore, a trip to Gettysburg is shorter than their daily commute to work," said Flowers. "Gettysburg is an inexpensive, yet great way to spend a vacation."

Several events in late summer and fall - including the Grand Opening of the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center - should help keep visitation to Gettysburg and Adams County strong for the remainder of 2008. Events such as the Gettysburg Wine & Music Festival, National Apple Harvest Festival, 145th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address and the holidays draw more than 100,000 visitors every year.

It is estimated that tourism will pump more than \$340 million in the Adams County economy this year.