
Summer Wrap Up

From campgrounds to attractions, from lodging & restaurant to retail, and education enrollment to cultural attractions, most of the industry said the same thing: good May and June, soft July, strong August and Labor Day...in some cases, record-breaking.

Many thanks to our "reporters" below for giving us their late summer perspectives from around the state.

From Jayne O'Connor with the White Mountains Attractions Association:

How was business this summer? Reports from area businesses have been overall very positive, with one innkeeper telling me the summer "more than made up for the tough winter we had last year."

We had a good mix of weather for the many types of businesses here in the White Mountains - which gave us our usual balancing act. There was sunshine for the mountain rides and amusement parks, cool weather for the trains, hot days for the water rides and just enough rain mixed in to help the restaurants and retail shops. Campgrounds did well, once the season got under way. Most of the attractions are reporting business was even or up from last year.

Canadians Welcome! Our Canadian inquiries were up by 20% percent this year, and many businesses told us they saw a dramatic increase in Canadian business. WMAA increased its investment in Canadian marketing starting two years ago, when we saw promising changes in the exchange rate. Now we are seeing Canadian visitors in numbers we haven't seen for 30 years. Mikey Duprey has also been attending Canadian travel shows, and making sales calls there to help bring business over the border. We'll continue that for next year, as the exchange rate is expected to remain favorable for at least another couple years.

From Robin Comstock with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce:

It has been a great summer, but given that Manchester is the gateway to the state, and we are a year-round destination, each season is a great season. We are seeing growth in the individual and family travelers, who use Manchester as the hub for the NH experience, and our meetings and conferences are off the charts. We are adding room inventory with new properties, and still filling our space on a regular basis. Our Welcome Center walk-in traffic is up...things are good in the Queen City!

From Denise Meadows with the EF Lane Hotel in Keene and our ear-to-the-ground for the Monadnock Region:

The B & Bs reported a very busy summer, with record-breaking occupancy for July & August. The EF Lane Hotel occupancy was down this summer, but we saw many repeat guests. Not many travelers from overseas, but the usual suspects from MA, CT, NY, NJ and PA. Keene is now going around and around smoothly with both of our summer construction of round-a-bouts almost over.

Peterborough has been named one of the top ten "Coolest Towns in the Country" by Budget Travel Magazine, and many people are checking out the Monadnock region for relocation. From the Hotel alone, we handed out over a dozen relocation packs. Keene had a nice mention in *Travel & Leisure* magazine's September issue. Gearing up for October and the *Pumpkin Festival!!*

From Amy Landers with the Lakes Region Association:

August was a dramatic change here in the Lakes Region - this is always our busiest month of the year. Typically this is when we see the most week long vacationers and families. Business was steady for most of our members with similar occupancy and attendees figures as the past few years during the month of August. Canadian travelers were more visible on the roads and in the visitor center throughout the summer, including August. During August we had two major events that brought visitors from all over the country: *SoulFest* held at Gunstock Mountain Resort and the *Timberman Triathlon*. Overall, businesses were pleased with the month of August which ended with beautiful weather during Labor Day Weekend. Now, we all look forward to a beautiful fall.

From Marti Mayne with the Mt. Washington Valley Chamber of Commerce:

Overall, with the exception of one retail response, the general word from MWVCC members is that business is either on par or up slightly over last year. Perhaps this is because those who are down tend not to answer these questions, although we did hear from some lodging members that bookings are off. We're also seeing a resurgence of Canadian visitors, now that the dollar is almost at par.

The properties that are seeing double-digit growth over the last two years are the properties that have invested time and money into marketing. They've invested in PR campaigns, new websites, upgraded photography, Search Engine Optimization and adword programs, blogs, and more. It takes a lot to stay current with today's travelers, and those properties who have are winning ■