



# Economic & Demographic Profile of Wisconsin's ATV Users:

Results of an economic survey conducted between June and October 2003

## Executive Summary

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*In conjunction with*

Wisconsin ATV Association (WATVA)

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## Introduction

The All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) industry has witnessed changes since Honda introduced the first ATV in 1971 – the three-wheeler. During the 1980s Suzuki was credited with introducing the first four-wheeler. According to the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA), an ATV is defined as a four-wheeled motorized vehicle designed for a single rider. In more general terms, a durable vehicle used for work and recreational purposes.

According to an article in the September 2003 issue of *ATV Action*, “when it comes to four-wheeling, Wisconsin is an undiscovered paradise.” During the past 15 years, ATV usage has increased dramatically. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources began registering ATVs in 1986, and by the end of 1987 there were a total of 25,600 registered ATVs. Just ten years later, that figure more than tripled to 79,245, and by the end of 2003, there were a total of 192,211 registered ATVs in the state. The popularity of ATV trail riding is evident in that Wisconsin is home to 5,555 miles of state-funded trails; 1,559 miles open for summer usage and 3,996 miles available in the winter. These figures do not include trails found on private lands or operated as club trails.

### 2003 Profile of Wisconsin’s ATV Users

- The majority of riders come from the Midwest: Wisconsin (86%), Minnesota (6%), Illinois (5%), Iowa (2%), Indiana (0.6%) and Michigan (0.5%). The shaded counties indicate the residence of midwestern visitors who took ATV trips in Wisconsin this summer.
- The average age of survey respondents was 40 years. Thirty percent have annual household incomes between \$41,000 and \$60,000; 24% had incomes between \$61,000 and \$80,000.
- Favored leisure activities include ATV riding, hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling and boating.
- Most (97%) owned their ATVs and on average, own two machines. Over the course of a year, these riders take an average of six Wisconsin ATV trips. Seven out of ten indicated they ride their ATVs in the winter.
- When planning their leisure trips, ATV users primarily rely on word of mouth recommendations, the Internet, Wisconsin’s Tourism Guides, local tourism information, the DNR, and magazines.



County of Residence for Wisconsin’s  
Midwestern ATVers

### Trip Characteristics

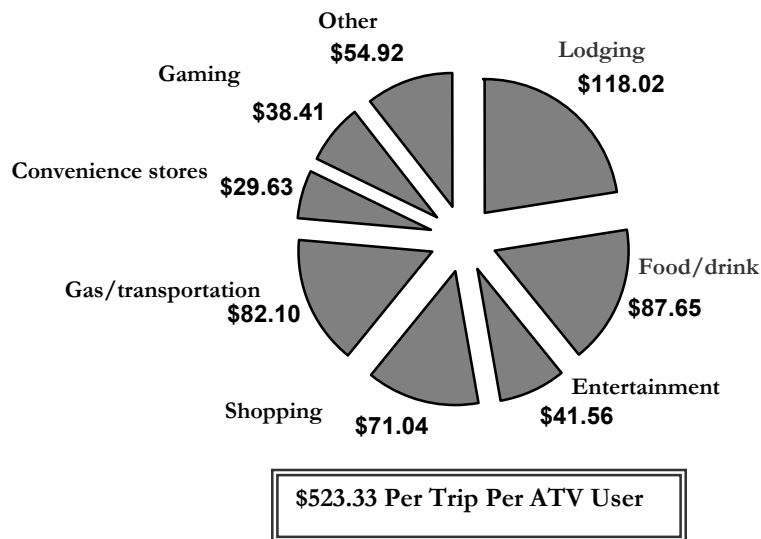
- Over half were in the area to specifically ride the trails; 21% were attending an ATV event as well as riding the trails; 17% were attending an ATV event and 5% were on a leisure trip.
- The majority (62%) were on an overnight trip from home and staying in RVs, hotel/motel, 2<sup>nd</sup>/vacation homes, with family and friends, campgrounds or rented cabins.
- Overall ATV visitors stayed 3 nights in the area. RV campers stayed the longest (3.7 nights) and hotel/motel visitors stayed the shortest (2.5 nights).
- The average ATV party consisted of almost five people and was primarily comprised of family and friends or family only groups. Over half of all travel groups did not have children under the age of 15.



- ATV users were planners. Twenty-five percent planned their trip within a month and 24% planned it between 1-3 months in advance. They relied on word of mouth recommendations, ATV clubs and the Internet ATV information.
- Other trip-related activities ATVers participated in while in the area included shopping, dining, visiting family/friends, attending ATV races, festival/event, water-related sports, going to a casino, museum/historic site, or other area activities.

### *Spending Habits of ATV Users*

Annual ATV expenditures were broken down into an average cost per trip. The graph below shows the average amount spent per person per ATV trip.



The average total per person per trip was \$523.33. Taking into consideration Wisconsin's ATVers stayed an average of 3.2 nights, the average daily expenditure was \$163.54.

### *Total ATV User Spending*

The individual per spending (\$523.33) patterns were expanded to include total spending using estimates of the total number of ATV registrations by state, the number of ATVs owned per individual, the number of trips taken per individual, and regional incidence of trail use and the respective trail mileage.

Based on this analysis, the annual total spending by all ATV users was \$295,285,693.

### *Spending by Out-of-State ATV Users*

Economic impact analysis identifies the "new dollars" flowing into a region from visitors who reside outside that region. For the state of Wisconsin, this amount of *new money* represents that which is spent by out-of-state ATV users. The total annual spending in Wisconsin by out-of-state ATVers is \$34,698,614.