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Cactus League boosted Arizona's economy before COVID-19 suspension

Total Economic Impact is \$363.6 million
\$213.7 million for Arizona's Gross Domestic Product

GLENDALE, Ariz. - The 2020 Cactus League season generated an estimated economic impact of \$363.6 million, including a \$213.7 million contribution to Arizona's Gross Domestic Product, before being suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study by the L. William Seidman Research Institute at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business.

Those figures, while robust, represent a dramatic decline from the most recent ASU survey, which recorded \$644.2 million in economic impact, including \$373 million in Gross

Domestic Product, over the full 2018 spring training season. The study estimated that the 2020 season would have produced impact "on a par" with the 2018 season had it not been curtailed.

The 2020 Cactus League season was suspended on March 12 in response to the pandemic.

"Even with a severely curtailed season, the Cactus League delivered significant economic benefit for Arizona," Cactus League President Chris Calcaterra said. "The pandemic's impact on the state's tourism industry has made it abundantly clear that we can't take spring training for granted. We're grateful to our stakeholders and partners for their support of this critically important tourism driver."

Researchers surveyed 2,344 visitors to Cactus League ballparks, including 1,446 non-Arizona residents. The estimated impacts are exclusively based on new dollars that flowed into the state from MLB teams and fans due to spring training. A GDP by State estimate is used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis as the primary indicator of the economic health of a specific geography.

At the time spring training was suspended, 139 of 237 scheduled Cactus League games had been played (89 games were suspended due to the pandemic and another nine were rained out).

Cactus League games in Arizona drew a total of 912,956 fans in 2020, an average of 6,568 per game (Cactus League teams also played four games in Las Vegas). Twelve of the 15 clubs saw their largest crowds in what turned out to be the final week of games.

"Unfortunately, the shutdown came as we anticipated the annual influx of spring breakers to Arizona," Cactus League Executive Director Bridget Binsbacher said. "Just as spring training offers fresh hope to baseball fans every year, we believe that the Cactus League will help lead the recovery of Arizona's tourism industry."

The study found that the Cactus League created 3,202 annual jobs paying \$128.3 million labor income in 2020. Spring training also directly generated a total of \$18.4 million in taxes for the state (\$13.1 million) and local governments (\$5.3 million).

About six in 10 Cactus League fans came from out of state in 2020, which is consistent with the 2018 ASU study. And most of those fans say spring training is the sole or primary reason for visiting Arizona - an indicator of the Cactus League's importance as a tourism driver.

The median Cactus League party (excluding Maricopa and Pinal residents) attended three games and spent \$335.71 per day, according to the study. Out-of-state and international visitors stayed within the Phoenix area for a median of 5 days.

Nearly a third (31.6 percent) of out-of-state fans said they would visit another part of Arizona during their trips, with North Central Arizona (Sedona and Prescott) and Northern

Arizona (Flagstaff, the Grand Canyon and Monument Valley) listed as the most popular destinations.

"The Cactus League is a key annual driver for tourism and hospitality; and 2020 is no different, despite the unprecedented circumstances," said Dr. Anthony Evans, Seidman's study author. "Adjusting for differences in the spending power of the dollar in both years, the total State GDP contribution of the first 139 baseball games by ballpark in 2018 and 2020 are comparable. On that basis, it's reasonable to assume that the total impacts would have been on a par with 2018 if the 2020 season had been played in full."

By the Numbers: Cactus League Economic Impact

Here is a closer look at some of the key figures in the 2020 Cactus League Economic and Fiscal Impact Report by the L. William Seidman Research Institute at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business.

How do Cactus League visitors spend their money?

This table breaks down the expenditures of out-of-state visitors to the Cactus League.

Expenditure Type	Estimate (Millions 2020\$)	Expenditure Type	Estimate (Millions 2020\$)
Lodging/Accommodation	\$43.2	Local Transportation	\$3.0
Bars and Restaurants	\$56.3	Rental Cars	\$12.4
Groceries	\$8.5	Gasoline	\$6.8
Souvenirs & Gifts	\$20.1	Other	\$3.9
Other Entertainment	\$14.2	Total	\$168.3

How much do Cactus League visitors spend?

This table shows the median daily spending per party for out-of-state visitors.

	2018	2020
Under \$100	8.6%	9.7%
\$100 to \$199.99	13.3%	14.9%
\$200 to \$299.99	13.3%	14.1%
\$300 to \$499.99	23.7%	29.6%
\$500+	41.0%	31.7%
Median Daily Spending	\$405	\$335.71
	N=2,622	N=1,493

How long do out-of-area Cactus League visitors stay?

This table shows how long Cactus League visitors stay. "Other AZ" represents Arizona residents from outside Maricopa County; "Other U.S." is U.S. residents from outside Arizona.

	2018	2020	Other AZ	Other U.S.	International
Day Trip	5.3%	1.3%	23.4%	0.6%	-
1 to 2 Nights	16.1%	13.8%	36.2%	13.6%	4.3%
3 to 4 Nights	35.5%	32.5%	14.9%	33.7%	17.4%
5 to 6 Nights	17.9%	20.2%	4.2%	21.2%	11.6%
7 to 8 Nights	11.3%	12.2%	8.5%	12.2%	17.4%
9+ Nights	13.8%	20.0%	12.8%	18.7%	49.3%
Median (excludes day trippers)	4	5	2	4	7
	N=2,622	N=1,493	N=47	N=1,377	N=69

Importance of Spring Training (among non-Arizona visitors)

In keeping with prior studies, non-resident fans were asked about the importance of Spring Training on their decision to visit Arizona.



Travel to other parts of Arizona

This table shows the responses of non-resident fans who were asked if they visited other parts of Arizona during their Cactus League vacation.

	2018	2020	Non-AZ U.S.	International
Yes	26.6%	31.6%	30.9%	44.9%

No	73.4%	68.4%	69.1%	55.1%
	N=2,490	N=1,446	N=1,377	N=69

Where do Cactus League fans visit in Arizona?

This table shows the destinations of fans who travel to other parts of Arizona during their trips to spring training.

	2018	2020	Non-AZ U.S.	International
Northern AZ	37.6%	33.5%	32.9%	41.9%
North Central AZ	39.8%	47.3%	47.7%	41.9%
Tucson/Southern AZ	24.0%	23.2%	22.3%	35.5%
West Coast AZ	9.5%	7.0%	6.3%	16.1%
Central AZ	18.1%	8.8%	8.9%	6.5%
Other/Don't Know	9.7%	7.2%	6.8%	12.9%
	N=663	N=457	N=426	N=31

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Arizona tourism leaders on the 2020 Cactus League economic impact study

Debbie Johnson/Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

"Even in a shortened season, it's clear that the Cactus League is an important tourism driver for Arizona. We know that the Cactus League will play a key role in Arizona's economic recovery. Spring training has inspired hope in baseball fans for generations, and never more so than during these challenging times."

Doug Yonko/Board Chair, Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority

"Even in a shortened season, the Cactus League's strong economic impact represents a dividend of the Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority's investment in spring training facility construction and renovation. Last season made it clear that we must not take the spring training industry for granted, and we expect spring training to help drive Arizona's economic recovery. We congratulate the Cactus League for delivering on the promise made to Maricopa County voters when they approved Prop. 302."

Kim Sabow/President & CEO, Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association

"Tourism is truly the life blood of Arizona, and the Cactus League is an all-star attraction for out-of-state visitors. The Cactus League has long been a treasured springtime destination for generations of baseball fans. When the time is right, Arizona's tourism industry looks forward to welcoming those fans back to our state."

Sandra Watson/President & CEO, Arizona Commerce Authority

"The Cactus League has delivered significant value for the state's economy, even despite the 2020 spring training season being curtailed. Spring training baseball is a

proven economic driver, and I'm confident it will play a key role as Arizona's tourism industry continues to recover from the pandemic."

About the Cactus League:

Since 1947 the Cactus League Association has provided a forum to share operational efficiencies; establish and nurture business relationships with Major League Baseball franchises; and promote and fundraise for the Cactus League. With 15 MLB teams training in 10 ballparks across Maricopa County, the Cactus League delivers consistently strong economic impact for Arizona. The Cactus League Association is committed to strengthening and promoting this vital industry while serving our communities and contributing to the quality of life for Arizona residents and visitors.

For more information visit <http://www.cactusleague.com>

