



The Economic Benefit of Barkerville

Barkerville as one of the major tourism draws in the north Cariboo obviously contributes to the economy of Quesnel, but how can that be measured? Economic benefit is usually considered to be the *new* money that an activity or attraction brings into a certain economic region. How much economic activity does Barkerville generate for the region? We can't answer that question in a short column but we can give some indications.

A large portion of Barkerville's \$2.3 million budget spent in Quesnel. Building supplies are purchased here. Vehicles are serviced here. In addition, 23% of Barkerville's staff lives in Quesnel and all employees spend their paycheques here. But where does that money come from? Is it 'new' money?

Economists generally consider that money that comes from outside the local economy is new money. A large portion of Barkerville's revenue stream comes from the provincial government and is money the region would not receive if not for Barkerville. As a large portion of Barkerville's visitors are from outside the Quesnel region (about 90%), that portion of the admissions money is new. A rough estimate indicates that Barkerville attracts about \$2.1 million dollars in direct revenues into the region every year. This only includes the money paid directly to Barkerville.

However, this money only has a new economic benefit if it is spent locally. Again a very conservative estimate is that Barkerville spends \$1.7 million of that money locally.

The money that visitors from outside the region spend en route to Barkerville also needs to be considered. At least 60,000 visitors are from outside the region. We know they spend an average of two days in the region and spend over \$35/day. This is a direct impact of over \$4 million annually. This money is spread across the north Cariboo in the accommodation, food, retail and transportation sectors.

To this needs to be added the impact of all of these monies as they cycle through the economy, being spent and re-spent. This is what is called the 'multiplier' effect and depending on the economy can double or triple the annual economic impact.

Further research is needed to determine an actual figure for the total annual impact of Barkerville on the north Cariboo, but a conservative guess of \$10 million annually would be a starting point.

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