

### General Overview

- More than six million trips are made to Lake Erie Shores & Islands each year, making it one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Midwest.
- According to “The Economic Impact of Tourism in Erie County, Ohio” conducted for the Ohio Department of Development - Tourism Division, visitors spent more than \$1.12 billion in Erie County in 2007.
- According to the same survey, the average length of stay at hotels/motels/resorts is three (3.57) nights, while the average size of a traveling party is three (3.6) people. 41.8% of rooms are rented by visitors from out-of-state.
- According to the Bureau’s “2008 Visitor Postcard Survey” the top six reasons for visiting Lake Erie Shores & Islands were
 

1. Lake Erie Islands	4. Lighthouses
2. Beaches	5. Historical Sites
3. Cedar Point	6. Waterparks
- According to the same survey, 71% visit between June and September, as summer is the most popular time of year to visit. However, due to the emergence and popularity of indoor waterpark resorts, visitation during the shoulder seasons is growing. Forty-one percent were return visits, with fifty-nine percent new visitors to the region.
- Erie County visitor profile
  - 69% of visitors are couples with children
  - Median group size 4.00
  - Average income is between \$50,000 and \$64,999
  - 84% come for a family vacation
  - Average expenditure for group is \$934.83
- Each year more than 3 million people visit Cedar Point Amusement Park which has been awarded the Golden Ticket Award for “The Best Amusement Park in the World” by *Amusement Today* an international industry newspaper, for twelve straight years. (09/09)
- Erie County has catapulted to national prominence as a vacation destination. Its market boundaries continue to stretch farther than 500 miles, meaning additional extended stays. The area is no longer perceived as just a summer (June through August) destination.
- In fiscal year 2008, at least 374,584 people sought assistance from Lake Erie Shores & Islands via the phone, the web or an office visit.
- Erie County is within one day’s drive of over 60 million people.

### Local Statistics

#### 2000 Population

Erie County Total.....	79,551
Sandusky.....	27,844
Vermilion.....	10,927
Huron.....	7,958
Milan.....	1,445
Castalia.....	935
Kelleys Island.....	367

#### Geography

Area.....	264 square miles
Shoreline.....	35 miles
Wetlands.....	8,560 acres

#### Climate

Mean Temperature.....	49°F
Average Rainfall.....	45.03 ins.

## Tourism Economic Impact

√ Visitors generated almost \$1.1 billion in business activity in Erie County in 2007, up 6.7% from 2006. Comparatively, Northwest Ohio sales growth was 3.7% and state of Ohio sales growth was 4.9%.

√ 24% of the total tourism sales in Northwest Ohio (4.7 billion in 22 counties) are generated in Erie County.

√ 30% of the total tourism sales in Northwest Ohio (4.7 billion in 22 counties) are generated in the Lake Erie Shores & Islands region (Erie and Ottawa counties).

√ Tourism supports 1 in every 4 (over 26%) private sector jobs in Erie County.

√ Tourism generated \$83.5 million in state and local taxes in 2007.

√ Tourism is a diverse composite of economic activities, including transportation, recreation, retail, lodging, and food & beverage sectors.

*(Data compiled by Tourism Economics and Longwoods International, 2007)*

## Funding the Erie County Visitors Bureau

The Sandusky/Erie County Visitors Bureau is funded by a 2% county-wide lodging tax. In fiscal year 2008 (October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008) \$1,043,766.59 was collected for the bureau's operating budget, up 14% from the previous year.

## Overnight Accommodations

Erie County offers a variety of lodging options to fit every budget; romantic bed and breakfasts, rustic campgrounds for tents and RV's, quaint lakeside cottages, modern hotels, motels and luxury resorts.

Hotel/Motel rooms.....	5,880
Bed and Breakfast Rooms.....	94
Marinas.....	60 marinas with 7,179 docks
Campground Sites.....	2,214

## The Best Time to Visit...Anytime!

Although best known for its abundant summer attractions, Lake Erie Shores & Islands is a year-round destination.

In the fall, visit harvest festivals, sample fresh cider, tour wineries during peak season, celebrate HalloWeekends at Cedar Point or Harvest Happenings at Erie MetroParks, fish for walleye and perch, pick a prize pumpkin or canoe a scenic river.

In the winter, snuggle by a roaring fire at a romantic retreat, tour historic homes bedecked for the holidays, browse for antiques and collectibles, drive through the "Firelands Festival of Lights" at Sawmill Creek or watch Santa arrive aboard an ice breaker. Warm up and splash the day away at an indoor waterpark resort. A few museums are open year-round, as are wineries.

In the spring, marvel at the annual bird migration, peddle old canal ways, treat yourself to locally made confections, or explore a hidden garden. Numerous attractions re-open in spring, a month before Cedar Point's opening in early May, such as family activity parks, museums and animal parks.