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Economic contribution of ice arena events and operations in Detroit Lakes

A report of the Economic Impact Analysis program

Authored by Brigid Tuck and Fernando Quijano



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Executive summary: Economic contribution of ice arena events and operations in Detroit Lakes

As part of its mission, the City of Detroit Lakes Parks and Recreation department maintains a portfolio of local parks, trails, and facilities, including the Kent Freeman Arena. Kent Freeman Arena is primarily used for skating-related activities, as the building contains two sheets of ice. The community also uses the arena for other celebrations and community events, such as the Becker County Fair.

For many parks and recreation departments, hosting tournaments and games is a critical source of revenue. Tournaments and games also bring revenue to businesses in the community. Stakeholders in Detroit Lakes were interested in understanding the economic value of the ice arena events and operations. Thus, they asked University of Minnesota Extension to conduct a study measuring the economic contribution of the arena.

Findings from the analysis include the following:

- **Hockey and figure skating events at Kent Freeman Arena drew thousands of visits from across Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota to Detroit Lakes.**

During the 2025 - 2026 season, 178 hockey games were played in the arena. As a result, an estimated 16,050 people visited the community. The event attendees stayed between one and three days in Detroit Lakes, resulting in 25,700 visits.

Of the event attendees, nearly three out of every four (71 percent) were from outside of Detroit Lakes. Hockey and figure skating event attendees spent nearly \$3 million at businesses in the community.

- **Hockey and figure skating event attendees stayed at local hotels and dined at local restaurants.**

Mobile analytics data demonstrated that more than one event attendee in four (27 percent) was at a hotel immediately prior to visiting the arena. In addition, 21 percent of the event attendees dined out before attending a game. Upon leaving the arena, 32 percent of the event attendees went to a restaurant and 20 percent went to a hotel.

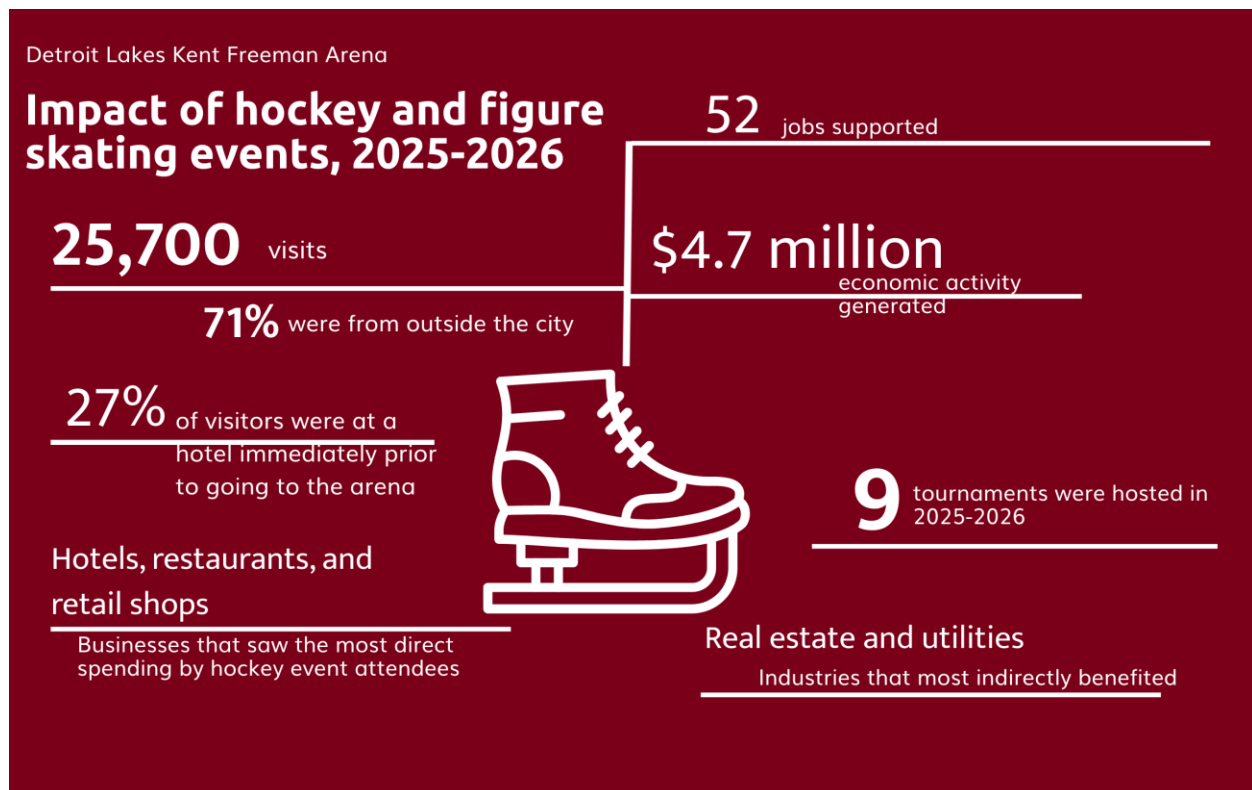
- **Hockey and figure skating events, along with the operations of Kent Freeman Arena generated millions in economic activity.**

Hockey and figure skating events, plus operations at the Kent Freeman Arena, generated a total of \$4.7 million in economic activity during the 2025 - 2026 season, including an estimated \$1.1 million of labor income. The events and operations supported 52 jobs in the

community. The impacts include both direct spending at places visited by event attendees and the ripple effects on other businesses throughout the community.

- **The industries that most directly benefited from the hockey and figure skating events included hotels, restaurants, and retail shops.**

Industries that indirectly benefited from the events included real estate, utilities, and construction.



Project overview

As part of its mission, the City of Detroit Lakes Parks and Recreation department maintains a portfolio of local parks, trails, and facilities, including the Kent Freeman Arena. The arena was originally built in the 1960s and underwent renovation and expansion in the 1990s. While owned by the city, activities are offered at the arena in partnership with youth programs, the school district, and other local organizations, such as the county fair board.

For many parks and recreation departments, hosting tournaments and games is a critical source of revenue. Tournaments and games also bring revenue to businesses in the community. Stakeholders in Detroit Lakes were interested in understanding the economic value of the ice arena events and operations. Thus, they asked University of Minnesota Extension to conduct a study measuring the economic contribution of the arena.

The goal of this research was to answer the following questions.

- How much economic activity do hockey and figure skating events at the arena generate in Detroit Lakes?
- What type of businesses directly and indirectly benefit from hockey and figure skating events?
- What opportunities exist to increase economic activity from the ice arena?

Economic contribution

Economic contribution includes direct, indirect, and induced effects. This section of the report explains how the direct, indirect, and induced effects were calculated for the arena.

Direct effect

The direct effect is the initial change in the economy due to an activity or event. When people travel to Detroit Lakes to attend, for example, a hockey tournament, they may also go out to eat, shop at a local store, and stay overnight in a hotel. This spending by hockey players and their families is the direct effect. In addition, the City of Detroit Lakes operates the ice arena. City spending is also part of the direct effect.

Attendee spending

The formula for calculating the amount of spending by attendees of events at the arena is:

$$\text{Ice arena event attendee spending} = \text{Number of visits} * \text{spending per visit}$$

Spending per attendee

To measure attendee spending, Extension used estimates from previous studies of event attendees in Greater Minnesota. In the past 10 years, Extension, along with its partner at University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), has conducted dozens of event attendee surveys, including several related to hockey. Extension, with assistance from UMD, compiled a standard spending pattern based upon those studies.



This analysis used two spending profiles—one for residents and local attendees and one for long-distance visitors. It was necessary to have the two profiles since the two groups have different spending patterns (Table 1).

Residents and local attendees (defined as those traveling less than 50 miles or not staying overnight to attend the hockey games) spend less on average than long-distance visitors. Based upon previous studies, Extension estimates that residents and local attendees spend \$53.90 per person, per day, when traveling to events. Long-distance visitors, on the other hand, spend \$167.80 per person, per day. A significant portion of the difference is lodging expenditures, but visitors who travel longer distances also spend more on dining out (they eat more meals) and on transportation.

Table 1: Estimated spending per attendee, hockey and figure skating events, Detroit Lakes
Source: Extension estimates based on previous studies

Category	Residents & local attendees	Long-distance visitors
Lodging	\$0	\$61.10
Restaurants	\$21.70	\$37.20
Groceries	\$1.60	\$9.20
Gasoline	\$8.40	\$21.60
Other transportation	\$0.40	\$2.80
Entertainment	\$4.20	\$9.50
Shopping	\$15.10	\$18.60
Miscellaneous	\$2.50	\$7.80
Total	\$53.90	\$167.80

Number of attendees

To measure the number of attendees, the City of Detroit Lakes provided Extension with a list of all hockey and figure skating events held at the arena. From there, Extension classified the hockey games into one of three categories—high school games, youth hockey games, and tournaments. “Youth hockey games” were defined as games where a Detroit Lakes youth team played one game against an opposing team, and it was not part of a tournament. For example, on November 14, the Bantam B team played a single game against West Fargo.

Extension further divided the hockey games based on the home location of the participating teams. The Detroit Lakes teams were classified as residents. Teams with a home location within 50 miles of Detroit Lakes, such as Fergus Falls, were considered local attendees. Finally, teams traveling more than 50 miles were considered long-distance visitors (Table 2).

For both the high school and youth hockey games classifications, each time a team played they were counted in the “number of teams” column in Table 2. Detroit Lakes does not have 52 hockey teams; rather, between both varsity and junior varsity and girls and boys teams, high school teams from Detroit Lakes played 52 games at their home arena. Similarly, teams from Detroit Lakes played 78 single youth hockey games during the season.

Due to the nature of the games, Extension only classified high school teams as long-distance visitors when they both played on a weekend and traveled more than 50 miles, since most high school hockey teams travel home on a team bus following the game.

While hockey teams can vary in size, many have between 13 and 16 players. Thus, Extension used an estimate of 14 players per team. When youth teams play, the players’ families and friends typically also travel to the community. A previous survey in East Grand Forks found that for each hockey

player, there were 3.1 people who visited. The hockey tournament estimates also included the Rhino or “old timer” tournament.

Finally, the Lakes Figure Skating Club hosted a figure skating show at the arena. Estimates from the figure skating club indicated that 600 people were in attendance for the show. Extension estimates the majority of the attendees came from within the community (55 percent), while another 38 percent came from the local area.

Based on the above assumptions and figures, Extension calculated there were 16,050 individuals who were in Detroit Lakes for hockey games and figure skating events during the 2025 - 2026 ice season.

Table 2: Estimated number of attendees and visits, hockey and figure skating events, Detroit Lakes, Extension calculations

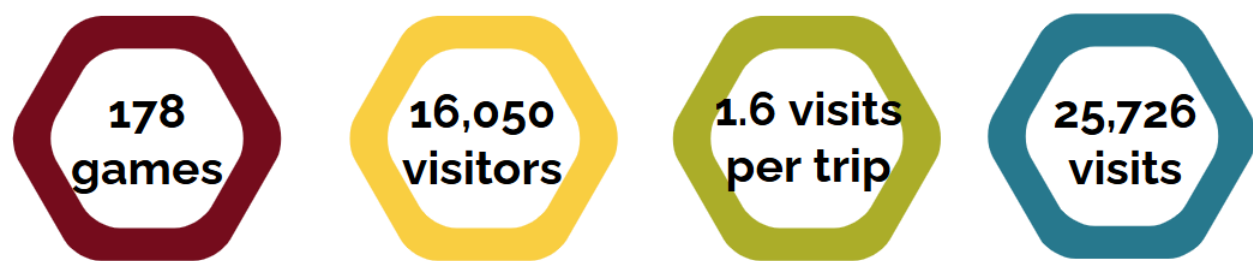
Category	Number of teams	Players per team	Attendees per player	Total attendees	Number of days	Total visits
High school games						
Residents	52	14	3.1	2,257	1	2,257
Local attendees	47	14	3.1	2,040	1	2,040
Long-distance visitors	5	14	3.1	217	2	434
Youth hockey games						
Residents	78	14	3.1	3,385	1	3,385
Local attendees	28	14	3.1	1,215	1	1,215
Long-distance visitors	50	14	3.1	2,170	2	4,340
Tournaments						
Residents	16	14	3.1	694	2	1,388
Local attendees	9	14	3.1	391	2	782
Long-distance visitors	71	14	3.1	3,081	3	9,243
Figure Skating						
Residents				330	1	330
Local attendees				228	1	228
Long-distance visitors				42	2	84
Total	356			16,050		25,726

The spending profiles are per person, per day, so Extension also needed to calculate the total number of visits. For each category, Extension used the following assumptions.

- High school games: Residents and local attendees were in the community for one day, while long-distance visitors stayed for two days.
- Youth hockey games: Residents and local attendees were in the community for one day, while long-distance visitors stayed for two days.
- Tournaments: Residents and local attendees were in the community for two days, while long-distance visitors stayed for three days.
- Figure skating: Since it was a one-day event, residents and local attendees were in the community for one day, while long-distance visitors stayed for two days.

This process resulted in an estimated 25,726 visits to Detroit Lakes due to hockey games, hockey tournaments, and a figure skating event (Figure 1). Of the event attendees, 71 percent were from outside of the Detroit Lakes area.

Figure 1: Estimated number of attendees and visits, hockey and figure skating events, Detroit Lakes, Extension calculations



To verify the attendance figure estimates, Extension used the mobile analytics platform, Placer.AI. Mobile analytics platforms compile patterns from cell phone location data. To analyze the data, Extension established a geolocation for the Kent Freeman Arena. The Placer.AI tool then estimated the number of cell phones within the arena during the selected period. The tool also provided information about the location of the cell phones immediately prior to and after visits to the arena. Finally, the tool gave data on the home location of the cell phones.

Mobile analytics platforms have limitations, and one of relevance to this research is that cell phone data is not provided for children under the age of 18. The information provided here, then, represents adults at Kent Freeman Arena, but not children or individual hockey players or figure skaters. For more on the limitations of mobile analytics, please see Appendix 1.

The mobile analytics data includes all people who visit the hockey arena for any purpose. While games and tournaments drive many of the visits, the arena is also used on a regular basis for practices. To account for people at the arena to drop off or pick up their children, Extension filtered the mobile analytics data to include only those at the arena for more than 45 minutes (thus, eliminating parents who walk their kids in and out) and those traveling more than 15 miles to the arena (thus, eliminating the day-to-day arena users). With those filters in place, the platform estimated there were 14,300 visitors between November 2025 and March 2026. On average, each person visited the arena 2.1 times, for a total of 30,400 visits.

Extension estimates, based on the number of games and tournaments, indicated there were 25,726 visits during the 2025 - 2026 season. The Placer.AI data estimated 30,400 visits in the 2025 - 2026 season. For purposes of the economic contribution analysis, Extension used 25,726 visits.

Total attendee spending

Using the spending profiles and the number of attendees, people attending hockey games and tournaments at Kent Freeman Arena in Detroit Lakes spent a total of nearly \$3 million during the 2025 - 2026 season (Table 3). The highest amount of spending was at hotels and other lodging establishments, restaurants, and retail shops.

Table 3: Total estimated spending by attendees, hockey and figure skating events, 2025 - 2026 season, Detroit Lakes
Source: Extension estimates

Category	Residents	Local attendees	Long-distance visitors	Total	Total without residents
Lodging	\$0	\$0	\$861,790	\$861,790	\$861,790
Restaurants	\$159,950	\$92,660	\$524,180	\$776,790	\$616,840
Groceries	\$11,480	\$6,650	\$129,460	\$147,590	\$136,110
Gasoline	\$61,900	\$35,860	\$304,750	\$402,510	\$340,610
Other transportation	\$2,650	\$1,540	\$39,630	\$43,820	\$41,160
Entertainment	\$30,700	\$17,780	\$133,970	\$182,450	\$151,750
Shopping	\$111,300	\$64,480	\$262,440	\$438,220	\$326,920
Miscellaneous	\$18,700	\$10,830	\$110,560	\$140,090	\$121,390
Total	\$396,680	\$229,800	\$2,366,780	\$2,993,260	\$2,596,570

Operations spending

In addition to attendee spending, expenditures by the City of Detroit Lakes to operate the arena are part of the direct effect. In fiscal year 2025, the City of Detroit Lakes budgeted \$529,610 for daily operations (Table 4). Budgeted expenditures were obtained from the sport commission's agenda.

Table 4: Budgeted expenditures, Kent Freeman Arena, Detroit Lakes, fiscal year 2025
Source: City of Detroit Lakes sports commission

Category	Amount of spending
Salaries, wages, and benefits	\$192,460
Utilities and gas	\$128,900
Repair and maintenance	\$60,000
Supplies and equipment	\$39,800
Professional services	\$18,450
Transfer to equipment fund	\$90,000
Total	\$529,610

Total direct effect

Including both attendee spending and operations spending, the total direct effect of the Kent Freeman Arena was more than \$3.5 million for the 2025 - 2026 season (Table 5).

Table 5: Total direct effect, Kent Freeman Arena, Detroit Lakes, 2025 - 2026 season
Source: Extension estimates

Category	Direct Effect
Visitor spending	\$2,993,260
Arena operations	\$529,610
Total	\$3,522,870

Indirect and induced effects

Indirect and induced effects are the impacts on other businesses due to the direct spending. Indirect impacts relate to the supply chain—for example, a visitor buys dinner at a local restaurant. That restaurant, in turn, must make purchases from its food supplier, from the local utility for electricity, and so forth. Those businesses then increase their production, demanding more from their suppliers, and so forth. Induced impacts relate to the spending of income. A restaurant worker earns

income, which they then spend on housing, health care, and food. Thus, there is increasing activity on those supply chains.

Extension used the input-output model IMPLAN for this analysis. Input-output models trace the flow of goods and services throughout an economy. Once the flow is established, the models can quantify how a change in one area of the economy (for example, tourism) affects other areas of the economy. Extension used the IMPLAN model to calculate the indirect and induced effects.

Total economic contribution

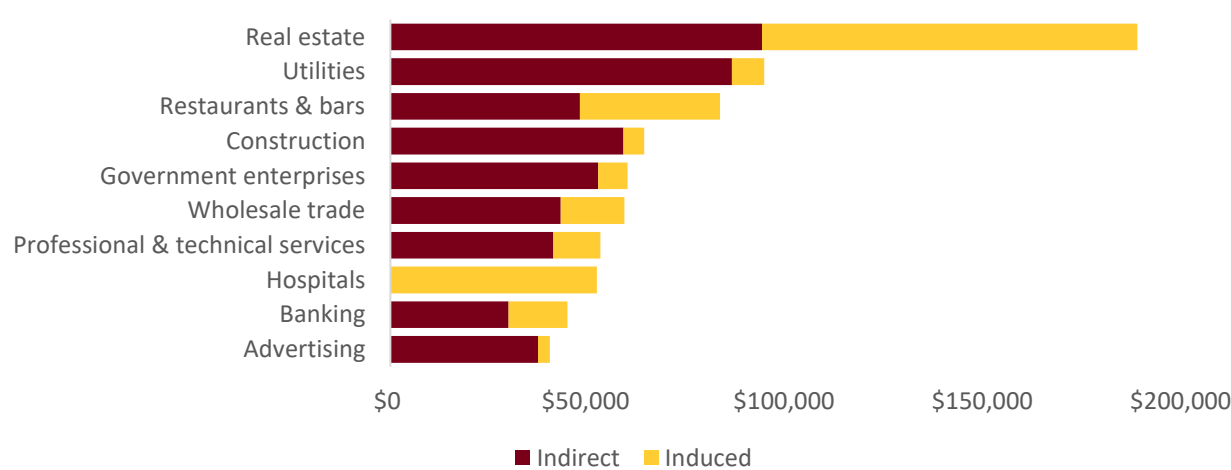
Hockey and figure skating events, along with operations at the Kent Freeman ice arena, generated \$4.7 million in economic activity during the 2025 - 2026 season (Table 6). This included \$1.1 million of labor income. The events and operations supported 52 jobs in the community.

Table 6: Economic contribution, Kent Freeman ice arena, 2025 - 2026 season, Detroit Lakes,
Source: Extension estimates

Category	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Output	\$3,522,870	\$716,480	\$468,240	\$4,707,590
Labor Income	\$792,290	\$175,650	\$132,730	\$1,100,670
Employment	23	15	14	52

The hockey and figure skating events, plus arena operations, generated nearly \$1.2 million of economic activity through the indirect and induced effects. The top industries that benefited through the ripple effects are real estate, utilities, and restaurants and bars (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Top industries impacted, indirect and induced effects, Kent Freeman arena events and operations, Detroit Lakes, sorted by output



Indirect effects are related to the supply chain. For the Kent Freeman arena, the indirect effects are highest in the real estate, utilities, and construction industries. To some degree, this reflects the operations of the ice arena. Ice arenas have high expenditures for utilities and require maintenance (which is part of the construction industry).

Induced effects are related to spending by employees, both those working at the ice arena and those working at businesses that serve hockey and figure skating event attendees. The induced effects are

highest in the real estate, hospitals, and restaurants and bars industries. This reflects households spending their incomes on housing, health care, and food.

Visitors only

When conducting economic contribution studies, economists argue the analysis should only include spending by people from outside the community.¹ This spending represents “new money” or money that likely would not have been spent in Detroit Lakes, if not for the ice arena events. For example, a family from Detroit Lakes going out to dinner after a hockey game may still have gone out to dinner, even if there was not a hockey game. The counterargument is that people might not have gone out to dinner or would have traveled out of the community, if not for the hockey event. Since there is not a “right or wrong” answer, this section presents the economic contribution if only spending by visitors is included in the direct effect.

Local attendees and long-distance visitors spent an estimated \$2.6 million while in the community. With the operations, the direct effect of the arena is \$3.1 million (Table 7). Based on this, the total economic contribution attributable to only visitors was an estimated \$4.2 million. This included \$981,850 in labor income.

Table 7: Economic contribution, Kent Freeman ice arena, long-distance visitors only, Detroit Lakes, 2025 - 2026 season
Source: Extension estimates

Category	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Output	\$3,126,180	\$647,090	\$420,230	\$4,193,500
Labor Income	\$702,400	\$160,290	\$119,160	\$981,850
Employment	21	15	14	50

Sensitivity analysis

The above analysis relies on several assumptions. To understand how the assumptions affected the results, Extension conducted a sensitivity analysis. Extension modeled two scenarios with slightly different assumptions. In the first scenario, Extension modeled a higher number of visits to the arena. In the second scenario, Extension modeled a slightly lower spending profile per visitor.

Scenario 1: The total number of attendees was 30,400.

The mobile analytics data indicated there were 30,400 visits to the arena. The number of visits could be higher than Extension’s estimates for a variety of factors, including that some teams had more than 14 players or some players traveled with more than three people. Under the first sensitivity analysis scenario, Extension ran the analysis with the higher number of event attendees.

If there had been 30,400 visits to the arena, the economic contribution of Kent Freeman arena event attendees and operations would increase to \$5.4 million, including \$1.2 million in labor income (Table 8).

Table 8: Sensitivity analysis scenario 1, economic contribution of 30,400 event attendees, Kent Freeman ice arena, Detroit Lakes, 2025 - 2026 season Source: Extension estimates

Category	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Output	\$4,066,510	\$797,660	\$517,760	\$5,381,930
Labor Income	\$878,310	\$195,180	\$146,810	\$1,220,300
Employment	27	20	15	62

¹ Crompton, J.L., Seokho, L., & Shuster, T.J. (2001). A guide for undertaking economic impact studies: The Springfest example. *Journal of Travel Research*, 40, 79-87.

Scenario 2: Spending per person was \$150 for long-distance visitors and \$40 for local attendees.

Extension used spending profiles developed from previous studies. To understand how visitor spending influenced the total economic contribution, Extension modeled a second scenario using lower per person spending figures of \$150 per person, per day, for long-distance visitors and \$40 per day for local attendees.

If event attendees had lower spending profiles, the economic contribution of Kent Freeman arena attendees and operations would decrease to \$4.2 million, including \$967,800 in labor income (Table 9).

Table 9: Sensitivity analysis scenario 2, economic contribution of lower per person spending, Kent Freeman ice arena, Detroit Lakes, 2025 - 2026 season Source: Extension estimates

Category	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Output	\$3,109,940	\$633,770	\$414,360	\$4,158,070
Labor Income	\$694,360	\$155,940	\$117,500	\$967,800
Employment	20	15	12	47

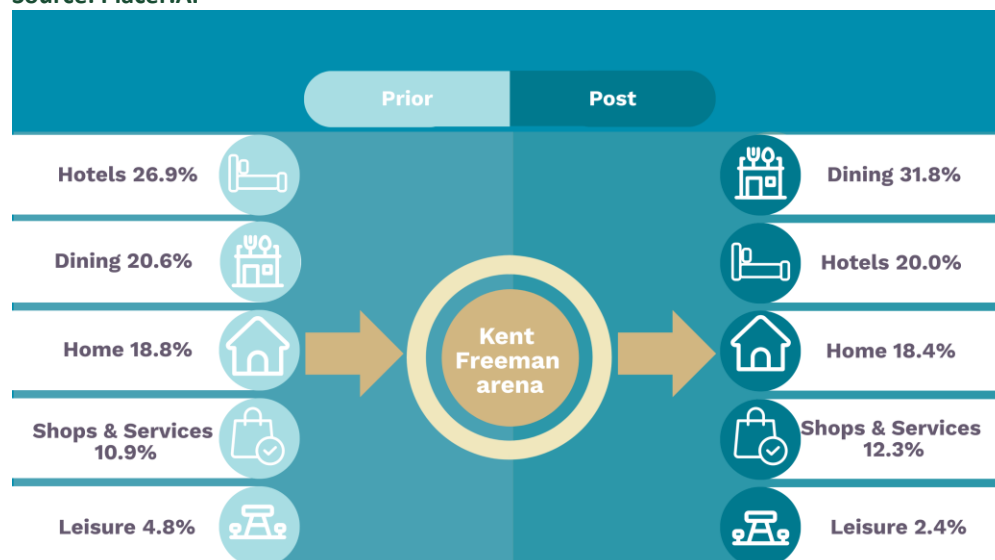
Insights from mobile analytics

As mentioned, the mobile analytics data can provide additional insight into the travel patterns of the ice arena event attendees.

The mobile analytics data reinforces the economic contribution analysis results. More than one of every 4 (26.9 percent) visitors to the Kent Freeman arena were at a hotel prior to visiting the arena (Figure 3). Other top locations prior to being at the arena were dining establishments (20.6 percent) and home (18.8 percent).

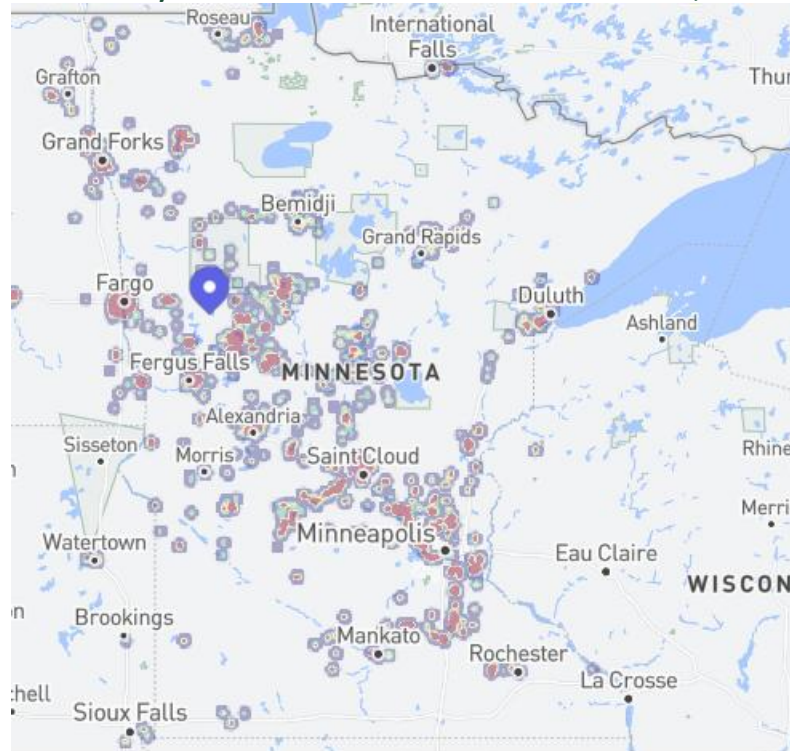
In addition, nearly one-third of event attendees went to a restaurant following their visit to the arena. Other top destinations after visiting the arena included hotels and home.

Figure 3: Visitor location prior to and after trip to Kent Freeman arena, including visitors who traveled more than 15 miles and stayed more than 45 minutes between November 7, 2025 and March 3, 2026, Source: Placer.AI



Kent Freeman arena visitors came from across Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota (Figure 4). This generally matches the home locations of the visiting hockey teams.

Figure 4: Home location of visitors to the Kent Freeman arena, including visitors who traveled more than 15 miles and stayed more than 45 minutes between November 7, 2025 and March 3, 2026, Source Placer AI



Appendix 1: Methods, terminology, and limitations

To properly interpret the results of both input-output models and mobile analytics platforms, it is important to understand the methods, the terms, and the limitations of the tools.

Input-output modeling

Input-output models exist to conduct economic impact analysis. There are several input-output models available, and IMPLAN is one such model. Many economists use IMPLAN for economic impact analysis because it can measure output and employment impacts, is available on a county-by-county basis and is flexible for the user. While IMPLAN has some limitations and qualifications, it is one of the best tools available for input-output modeling. A few definitions are essential to properly interpret the results of an IMPLAN analysis. These terms and their definitions are provided below.

One of the most critical aspects of understanding economic impact analysis is the distinction between the “local” and “non-local” economy. The model-building process identifies the local economy. Either the group requesting the study, or the analyst defines the local area. Typically, the study area (the local economy) is a county or a group of counties that share economic linkages. In this report, the study area is Becker County.

Output

Output is measured in dollars and is equivalent to total sales. The output measure can include significant “double counting.” Think of food sold at a restaurant, for example. The value of food (say, beef) is counted when it is sold from the farmer to the food manufacturing company, again when the food item (say, a hamburger patty) is sold to the wholesaler, and yet again when the restaurant sells it as a hamburger to a hockey game attendee. The value of the beef is built into the price of each of these items, and then the sale of each item is added to determine total sales (or output).

Employment

IMPLAN includes total wage and salaried employees, as well as the self-employed, in employment estimates. Because employment is measured in jobs and not in dollar values, it tends to be a very stable metric (no inflation).

Labor income

Labor income measures the value added to the product by the labor component. So, in the beef/hamburger example, when the beef is sold to the food manufacturing company, a certain percentage of the price is for the farmer’s labor to raise the cow. Then when the hamburger is sold to the restaurant, it includes some markup for its labor costs in the price. When the restaurant sells it to a hockey game attendee, he/she includes a value for the labor. These individual value increments for labor can be measured, which amounts to labor income. Labor income does *not* include double counting.

Labor income includes both employee compensation and proprietor income. It is measured as wages, salaries, and benefits.

Direct impact

Direct impact is equivalent to the initial activity in the economy. In this study, it is spending by ice-related event attendees and the City of Detroit Lakes.

Indirect impact

Indirect impact is the summation of changes in the local economy that occur due to spending for inputs (goods and services) by the industry or industries directly impacted. For instance, if



employment in a manufacturing plant increases by 100 jobs, this implies a corresponding increase in output by the plant. As the plant increases output, it must also purchase more inputs, such as electricity, steel, and equipment. As the plant increases purchases of these items, its suppliers must also increase production, and so forth. As these ripples move through the economy, they can be captured and measured. Ripples related to the purchase of goods and services are indirect impacts.

Induced impact

The induced impact is the summation of changes in the local economy that occur due to spending by labor, which is spending by employees in the industry or industries directly impacted. For instance, if employment in a manufacturing plant increases by 100 jobs, the new employees will have more money to spend on housing, groceries, and going out to dinner. As they spend their new income, more activity occurs in the local economy. This can be quantified and is called the induced impact.

Total impact

The total impact is the summation of the direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

Limitations

Several constraints are created during the input-output modeling process. One of the most critical is that prices are fixed. In certain economic impact studies, the impact may be large enough to influence prices, which would lead to inaccuracies in the IMPLAN results. While the Kent Freeman Arena drew visitors to Becker County, it is not likely it drew enough visitors to change prices.

Mobile analytics platforms

Mobile analytics platforms collect data from individual cell phones and aggregate the data to show patterns in the movement of people. There are a variety of mobile analytics platforms available, and Extension has a subscription to the Placer.AI tool. While Placer.AI was originally developed to help provide insight to retail businesses, it has evolved to include data on specific locations within a community (such as the hockey arena) and on the community as a whole. A few definitions are helpful in understanding the Placer.AI data.

Panel

Mobile devices, referred to as "panel devices," are the source of location data. Certain apps enable Placer.ai to make intelligent estimations using a sample set (only when users opt into this setting) to analyze the locations of different audiences. The observed mobile devices form a "panel," which allows Placer.AI to statistically draw more extensive estimations on visitation patterns for any location.

Placer requires its data partners to receive consent in accordance with applicable law. The data Placer.AI obtains from app partners is already stripped of personal identifiers before it is shared. Placer leverages a panel of tens of millions of devices and utilizes machine learning to make estimations for visits to locations across the country, representing approximately 8 percent of the population. Panel history goes back to January 1, 2017.

Panel visits

The observed unique number of visits to a specific location, drawn from panel devices.

Visitors

Refers to the number of unique individuals that visit a property, as opposed to visits, which only refers to the number of visits to a property.

A single visitor may visit a property multiple times during the report date range. For example, a panelist who visits a hockey arena once a week is counted as one visitor. In a span of one year, that visitor has generated 52 visits to the arena.

Visits

The extrapolated number of visits (foot traffic) at a property. This number is generated by observing the number of panel visits. Placer.AI runs a proprietary algorithm for extrapolating data against its panel, which produces an accurate estimation of visits to any given location. A visit is counted whenever someone visits a point of interest, but only once per day, per device. For example, if a person visits a hockey arena three times in one day, it counts as one visit. If they visit on three separate days, it counts as three visits.

Home location

Home locations are determined based on the number of times a visitor returns to a certain location during a weekly period, as well as consistent overnight stays. Visitors must spend approximately eight hours per day at a location, in which a portion of the visits are overnight, to qualify as a home location. Additionally, visitors must spend a substantial amount of time at the location each month.

Limitations

There are a few limitations which should be considered when interpreting the data from the Placer.AI platform.

- The data relies on mobile device owners with their location services enabled. People who choose either to not use a smartphone or to turn off location services will not be represented in the data.
- Information shared is restricted to adults over the age of 18. To protect minors, data from cell phones known to be owned or used by those under the age of 18 are not included in the results. Placer.AI uses sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, to account for minors.
- “Sensitive places” are not included. To avoid misconceptions and mitigate any potential concerns, Placer has adopted a policy restricting customers from generating reports for certain locations, including schools and churches.
- For most reliable data, business or geography must be “turned on” in the database. The platform works by overlaying a mobile device’s location with a physical location (such as a building). The physical location must be activated within the platform to match the mobile device with a location’s name.
- In low cellular service areas, accuracy can be an issue. In these areas (such as a large forest), location data on the mobile device may not be as accurate, thus making it difficult to match the device’s location with a physical location.
- In high density service areas, accuracy can be an issue. The mobile analytics platforms indicate the physical location of a device, such as an apartment building. However, it cannot determine which floor of the apartment building the device visits. If there is a coffee shop on the ground floor of the apartment building, it can be hard to determine if the mobile device user is in an apartment or at the coffee shop.