

## LAKE ERIE SHORES & ISLANDS ECONOMIC IMPACT OVERVIEW

Lake Erie Shores & Islands is the name for both a region in north central Ohio as well as the corporate name for our destination marketing organization. The region is essentially two counties, Erie and Ottawa. Together, this is one of the most visited leisure destinations in the state with estimated annual visits (pre-COVID) of 11 million. Based on 2019 data from Tourism Economics, the annual economic impact of tourism in our region is \$2.2 Billion with 13,721 tourism jobs, and annual tax impact of \$270.3 million.

The region has a wide variety of natural and scenic destinations to explore: including many state parks, miles of shoreline with different coastal terrain, public beaches, historic landmarks and lighthouses. These natural areas provide an outlet for naturalists, sportsman, hikers and families.

Communities in our region include Sandusky (county seat of Erie County), Port Clinton (county seat of Ottawa County), Marblehead, Lakeside, Genoa, Elmore, Oak Harbor, Huron, Catawba Island, Milan, Berlin Heights, Castalia, Vermilion, and Bay View.

In addition, just off the coast the region includes the Lake Erie Islands of South Bass (home of the village of Put-in-Bay), Middle Bass, Kelleys and North Bass. Each island offers something different with some being very quiet and others offering unique shops and restaurants, and nightlife filled with music and excitement similar to what you would find in the Florida Keys or the Caribbean. The islands are home to local wineries, bed and breakfast getaways and historic landmarks such as Perry's Monument, our nation's third tallest national memorial and Kelleys Island's glacial grooves. Some of the islands offer lodging options including hotels, cottages, vacation rentals, campgrounds and marinas.

Lake Erie Shores & Islands is also home to Cedar Point, The Roller Coaster Capital of The World, a great family destination with thrilling roller coasters and rides and shows the entire family can enjoy. There are also has three large indoor water park resorts Great Wolf Lodge, Castaway Bay, and Kalahari... also the largest hotel in Ohio with 890 rooms. The area also has several outdoor water parks, a drive-through wildlife park, and other family attractions of all types. Total number of hotel rooms in the region is approximately 8,000 with an additional 250+ B&B rooms and more than 2,000 vacation rental units. There are also more than 3,000 campground sites in the two-county area.

We're known as the *Walleye Capital of the World* with the most productive freshwater fishing in all the Great Lakes. Annual Lake Erie charter fishing revenue is estimated at \$10 million. We're also the *Warbler Capital of the World* with a spring migration that rivals just about anywhere in the northern hemisphere. Each year upwards of 90,000 birders from across the country and other parts of the world visit during April and May generating over \$40 million in economic impact. There are numerous wildlife refuges and natural areas that offer a wealth of nature-based activities.

We have strong meeting, conference, and competitive sports visitation throughout the year. The sports market was elevated greatly by the addition of two major sports complexes; one indoor and one outdoor. These projects developed through a partnership with Erie County, Cedar Point, Lake Erie Shores & Islands and the City of Sandusky are on track to generate a collective \$60 million+ in annual economic impact to the region.

In addition to all its amusements, Lake Erie Shores & Islands enjoys a rich cultural heritage. Several historic destinations explore the area's contributions throughout history, including its role in the Underground Railroad and Civil War, and its maritime, and wine-making heritage. Theatres, concerts, heritage celebrations and holiday themed and other events fill the calendar throughout the year.