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in the state. According to the Department of Employment and Economic Development, "tourism marketing provides a measurable return on investment" in Minnesota.\(^4\) For every $1 invested in tourism marketing, the state receives an estimated $4.60 in new state taxes, $20.40 in wages, and $53 in gross sales. All told, each day tourism and travel combined in Minnesota generates more than $32 million in gross receipts/sales.\(^5\)

Visitors to Minnesota have the potential to inject money into the state economy through tourism. The arts, which can link to tourism, provide one important example. Cultural tourists to the state spend an average of $614 per trip, which includes shopping and parking, as well as expenditures in hotels and restaurants.\(^6\)

The Mall of America (MOA) plays a very important role in the economy of Minnesota. MOA opened in 1992 and employs more than 10,000 workers.\(^7\) Costing $650 million to build and containing over 2.5 million square feet of leasable space, MOA is the largest mall in the country. It also pumps nearly $2 billion a year into the economy.\(^8\) Tourists represent every four of ten visitors that go to the mall. The mall has three distinct shopping seasons spread through the year and its own tourism department that welcomes tour groups.\(^9\)

MOA is also planning a second phase of development, which will include more retail space, hotels, restaurants, an office building, and possibly a spa or fitness center. This new project is estimated to cost anywhere from $500 million to $1 billion to build.\(^10\)

In addition, Minnesota's tourism industry is finally recovering from its downturn after the September 11 attacks: "Tourism in Minnesota, and in the U.S., is slowly recovering from..."

\(^1\) Hospitality Minnesota, “Tourism Funding.”
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Minnesota State Arts Board, “The Arts Are Important.”
\(^4\) Mall of America, “History of Mall of America.”
\(^5\) Mall of America, “Mall of America Facts.”
\(^6\) Mall of America, “Tourism Media.”
\(^7\) Carlson, “Expansion Project,” 1.


Sweeney, Emily (Mall of America customer service). Telephone interview, October 22, 2004.