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Cactus League A Major Economic Force, Studies Show

Spring training baseball has become a driving force in Arizona's economy according to a pair of studies released today by Governor Doug Ducey and members of the non-profit Cactus League Baseball Association.

The studies, conducted earlier this year, estimate spring training teams and the ballparks they play in now annually generate more than \$809 million in economic impact for the state.

Included in that number is more than \$544 million that results from out-of-state Cactus League fans attending games at ten Phoenix area ballparks. Year-round athletic and non-athletic events and baseball team spending at the ballpark facilities and in the host communities is credited with generating the remaining \$265 million included in the total.

"As the popularity and presence of the Cactus League grows year after year, so does the economic impact it has on Arizona. Even after spring training ends, the industry brings in visitors and money year-round," said Gov. Ducey. "The Cactus League celebrates 70 years next season, but our state economy celebrates every day of every year thanks to the presence of one of Arizona's longest and most lucrative traditions."

Two-thirds of the out-of-town fans surveyed said spring training was the primary reason for their visit to Arizona, with more than half of those coming from another state or country. Nearly 1.9 million fans attended Cactus League games this year, the most since the league was created in 1947.

"The Cactus League in many places is all that people know about Arizona. Spring training baseball is an ambassador to the rest of the nation, if not the world. Each year, it gives us the opportunity to tout what is good about our state," said Cactus League President Mark Coronado.

The 15 teams that practice and play here are all global brands that give Arizona a higher profile in the corporate community, according to Glenn Hamer, President and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Major League Baseball teams are global businesses with customers worldwide," Hamer said.

The spring training study conducted by Tucson-based FMR Associates showed the latest number jumped \$122 million from a total of \$422 million reported in the last study conducted in 2012. It represents spending by "out-of-area" fans only.

The second FMR study examined the impact of the teams' use of facilities during the regular and off-season periods, as well as other tournaments and events booked by host communities the remaining months of the year. The new estimate is up \$55 million from the total of \$210 million reported in 2012.