

Shutdown Shock: Reports from National Park Concessioners

National park concessioners provide lodging, food services, gifts and souvenirs, equipment rentals, transportation and other visitor services in more than 100 national park units across the United States. Their combined sales exceed \$1 billion annually. They pay more than \$100 million in franchise fees to the National Park Service every year. And they employ 25,000 people. Here are a few reports from the frontlines of the federal government shutdown that has closed the national parks – and impacted businesses large and small in urban and rural communities alike.

- **From Yosemite National Park, California**

Between today and Sunday, Yosemite will have 31,000 fewer visitors than it would have experienced (a reduction of 2/3 from what would be expected), \$2.2 million less revenues and 1,200 associates who will have experienced a reduction in pay or benefits because of the Government shut down.

The situation deteriorates after Sunday as we get to zero visitors and no hours for associates. We have about 1,400 people employed in Yosemite this time of year. Virtually all of them will face layoffs.

The \$2.2 million in lost near-term revenues will result in concessioner fee collections to NPS being reduced by \$220,000 (plus the entrance fees the government is not getting) and tax payments to local and state governments will be reduced by \$180,000. In addition, government costs will increase due to payment of unemployment benefits to employees who have reduced hours and earnings. Tourism is the leading source of commerce in Mariposa and the Mariposa economy will suffer at approximately double the impact of Yosemite alone. Tuolumne, Madera and Inyo counties will be similarly impacted. All this is in the face of the Rim Fire, which had a huge impact on the regional economies and on Yosemite. [Note: Four weddings booked for Yosemite this weekend – booked two years ago – have now been cancelled. How would you like to make the calls to the bride or her dad? How about the family members flying in for the wedding?]

- **From Gettysburg National Military Park, Pennsylvania**

For this week, 10/1-10/6, Eisenhower National Historic Site will miss 1,500 visitors and see some \$5,200 in lost revenues.

Gettysburg Battlefield Tours will miss 2,500 visitors and see a drop in revenues of some \$20,000 due to park road closures. Five to seven employees will be laid off or are at risk of lay-offs.

- **From Everglades National Park, Florida**

For this week, Everglades NP Shark Valley Tram Tours will see a drop of 600 visitors and a drop in receipts of \$17,000. Fifteen employees will be laid off or are at risk of lay-offs.

- **From Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming**

The shutdown will force us to close our operations – more than 400 rooms – three days early. We would normally operate at about 70% of capacity – and it is during a beautiful time of the year. We will be releasing some of our employees early for the season.

- **From Mount Rushmore National Memorial, South Dakota**
Here at Rushmore we estimate that this closure for one week (today through October 8) will impact 49,000 visitors and cost us \$247,095 in lost sales, and 38 employees per day on furlough.
- **From Acadia National Park, Maine**
At the restaurant and shop locations, there will be a loss of \$40,000 in sales per day and all the hourly staff, 60 individuals, face lay-offs.
- **From Lassen National Park, California**
We will lose \$100,000+ worth of revenue this week. We will be laying off all employees except key personnel -- a total of about 25 -- and have the logistical nightmare of what to do with food, perishable items and VERY unhappy guests, some of which are of course in route to us from distant locations right now.
- **From Alcatraz Island, California and the Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York**
Alcatraz will lose 5,000 visitors a day, Statue about 12,000. Combined 17,000 a day, or about 120,000 a week, 500,000 a month. Estimating average spending for the ferry, food and souvenirs of \$100+ per visitor puts the loss at nearly \$2 million per day. Employment loss will be significant. The Sandy-caused shutdown cost 130 employees their jobs. Alcatraz would likely be about 70, or 200 employees at risk together. Liberty Island alone during Sandy lost 500 direct, non-NPS jobs, including security, janitorial, maintenance, etc.
- **From the National Capital Region, Washington, D.C.** We anticipate losing approximately \$100,000/day in revenues and laying off 100 - 120 employees.
- **From Mount Rainier National Park, Washington**
Mt. Rainier anticipates losing approximately \$200,000/week and 50 employees have been laid off one week early (the lodge is seasonal).
- **From Two Companies, A Broader Perspective**
Total visitors turned away at Forever Resorts' operations in 12 National Park Units for the next week – approximately 70,000; lost revenues for same period will exceed \$1.8 million. Between 875 and 900 employees will be affected.

Xanterra estimates that it is losing around \$1 million a day in revenue across park operations in Crater Lake, Death Valley, Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Zion. And although income has stopped, operating costs continue. The company has approximately 3,350 employees working in the parks right now, and virtually all face furloughs or lay-offs.

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