

## Trends at the 60th Parallel

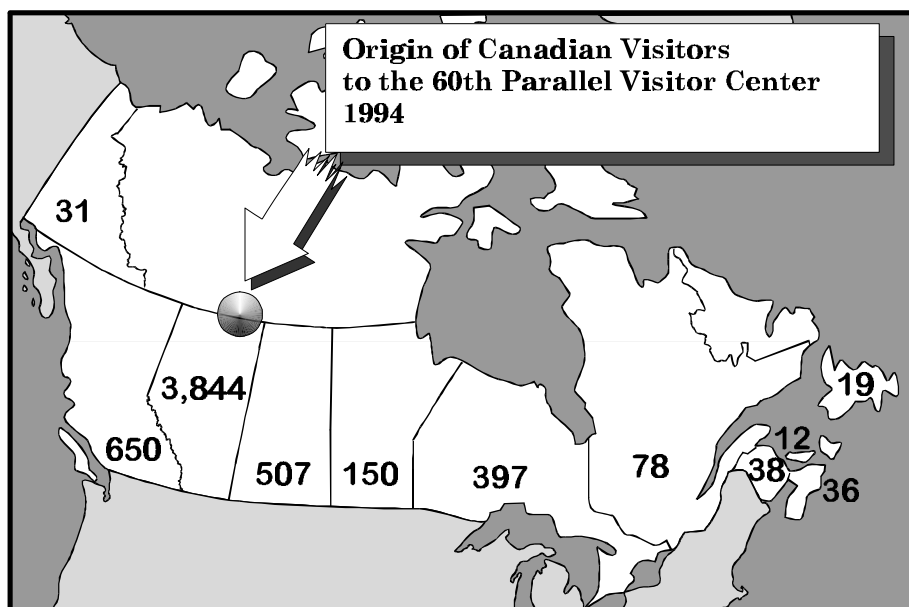
The Visitor Center at the 60th parallel is one of the major entry points to the Northwest Territories. People traveling by road to the Fort Smith region, Hay River, Yellowknife, Fort Province and Fort Liard areas can all enter via the 60th parallel. It is the busiest visitor center in the NWT.

People who stop at the Visitor Center are asked to sign the guest book. Last year over 2,977 people signed the guest book. Altogether they represented slightly over 7,000 visitors to the NWT; the average party size was about 2.4 people. Aside from recording their name and address, people comment on their trip, the reason for traveling and any comments on the road or facilities.

Due to the location of the 60th parallel, we may expect a significant majority of tourist entering the NWT via Highway 1 to stop at the facility (see the map in Figure 2, page 2). Although the numbers almost certainly understate visitations to this region of the NWT, they do provide a basis for comparing origins and destinations, and for comparing trends over time. More detailed estimates will be available from the Exit Survey results, expected by mid-March.

Figure 1 shows the number of visitors signing the guest book by province of origin. Over half (54%) of the visitors stopping are from Alberta. The other closest provinces, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, had the second and third highest visitation rates.

Figure 1



All other provinces had fairly low numbers. In total about 80% of visitors to the center were from Canada, about 15% were from the United States and 5% from other areas.

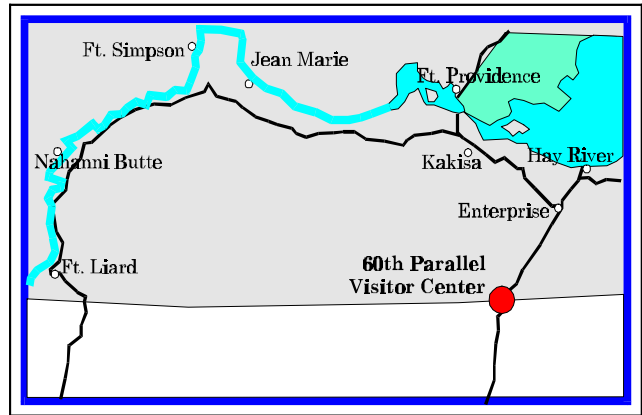
Overall, the number of US visitors stopping at the border represent a fraction of Canadian totals.

Although the numbers of US visitors is relatively small, the distribution is consistent with a major marketing report of the Northern Western States undertaken by Angus Reid; copies of this "Northern Tier Study" are available from your local tourism office or Policy, Planning and Human Resources (see the last page).

The highest number of US visitors stopping at the border were from Washington, followed closely by California. Other large states included Oregon, Ohio, Minnesota and Colorado.

Figure 3 shows the number of visitors signing the guest book from each state. It is evident from the map that the highest visitations originated from the "Great Lake" and "Western" regions.

Figure 2: Location of the Visitor Center



According to the Angus Reid study, people in these states like to travel to destinations which:

- Take care of the environment;*
- Offer rest and relaxation*
- Provide a safe and secure holiday*
- Offer opportunities to see wildlife and nature.*

Although it is an important niche market, people in the Northwestern States do not rate fishing, canoeing, gambling, night life or golfing as important in choosing a destination.

Figure 3

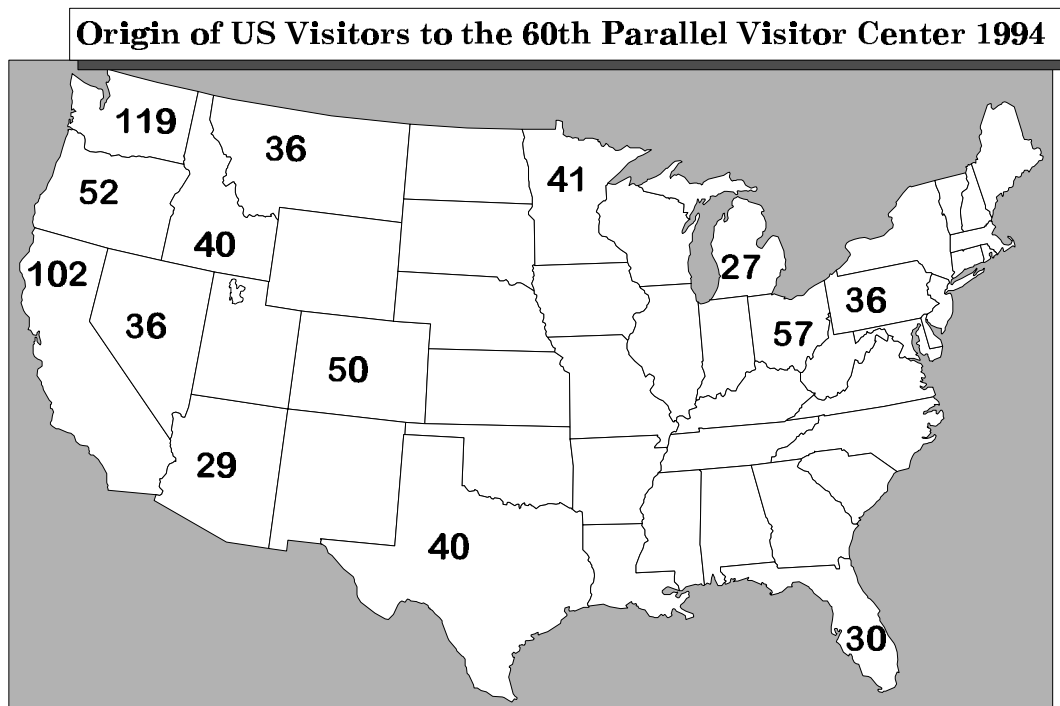


Figure 4 shows the annual number of resident and non-resident visitors stopping at the 60th Parallel Visitor Center; only the data from 1994 can be separated in state or province of origin. Although the number of people stopping has been increasing since 1991, the overall trend, as shown by the regression line, has been declining. In fact, current totals are less than 1987 levels. However, the line also shows it is difficult to predict next year's total based on past trends. It is likely that other factors, like economic conditions in our market provinces and states, have a far greater impact on visitations.

Considering that 55% of the non resident travelers stopping at the facility are from Alberta, we might expect economic conditions in that province to be a good indicator of visitor trends. Figure 5 plots changes in Alberta's rate of economic growth; years when the economy grew faster than expected are above the line, years when growth was below average are shown below the line. We can see there appears to a relationship. For example, 1991 was a poor year for the Alberta economy and for visitations to the 60th parallel.

Figure 6 shows non-resident crossings at the Fort Providence ferry. Since 1987 the staff operating the ferry have kept a log of non-resident vehicles. Although the numbers do not closely correlate with visitations to the 60th parallel, they do support the overall trend.

The chart shows that about 3,000 non resident travelers cross the ferry every year. Since the average party size of non resident visitors is about 2.4, we may expect about 7,200 visitors to cross the ferry. This is about the same number of non-resident travelers stopping at the 60th Parallel.

Figure 4

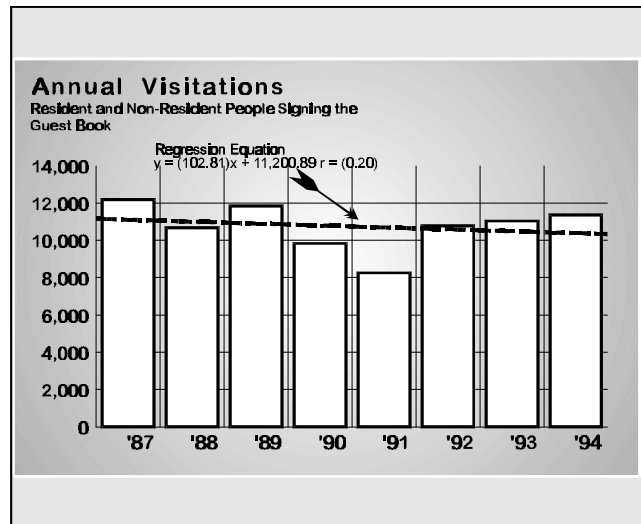


Figure 5

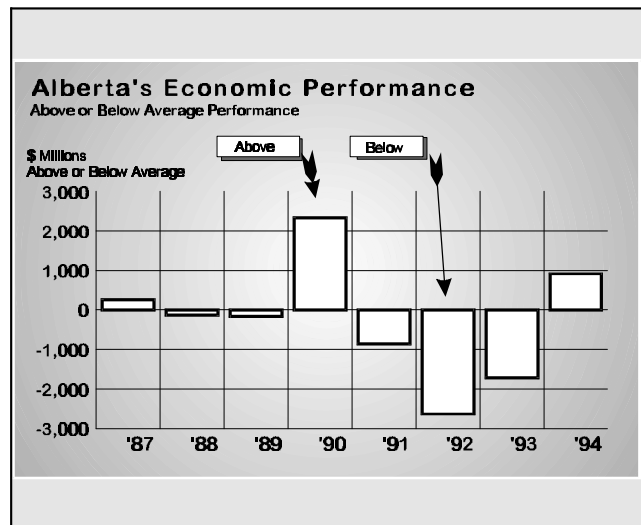
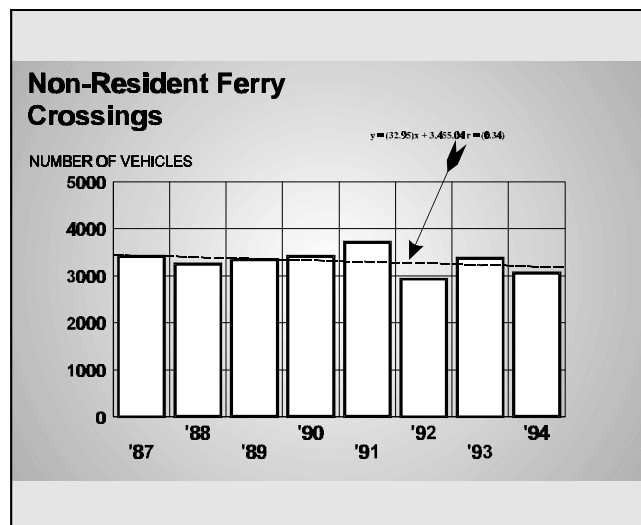


Figure 6



## Reasons For Visiting

When signing the logbook, people are asked their reason for travel; for this analysis the responses were grouped into 7 basic categories. Of these groups, the vast majority (59%) were on a general vacation. The second highest category was people visiting friends and relatives which accounted for 15% of the people stopping.

The number of people traveling for hunting was very low, likely because people hunting in the NWT rely on outfitters and fly directly to their destination, bypassing the border.

## Repeat Visits

Figure 8 shows the distribution between first and repeat visitors. As shown in the chart, there is a significant number of people, 46%, repeating a visit to the NWT.

## Travel Arctic

In the registry, visitors are also asked to record whether they used Travel Arctic literature, advertisements or the "800" number in deciding to travel to the Northwest Territories. As expected, responses to this question vary somewhat between "first time" and "repeat" travelers.

About 15% of first time travelers made use of Travel Arctic literature or used the toll free phone number. This drops to about 9% of the "repeat" visitors.

Figure 7

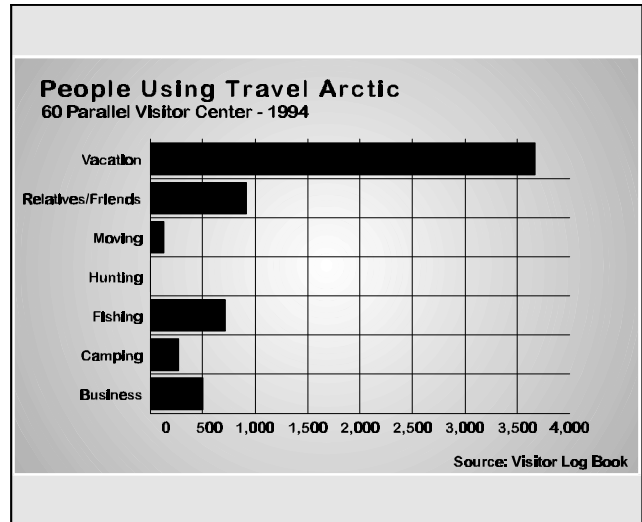


Figure 8

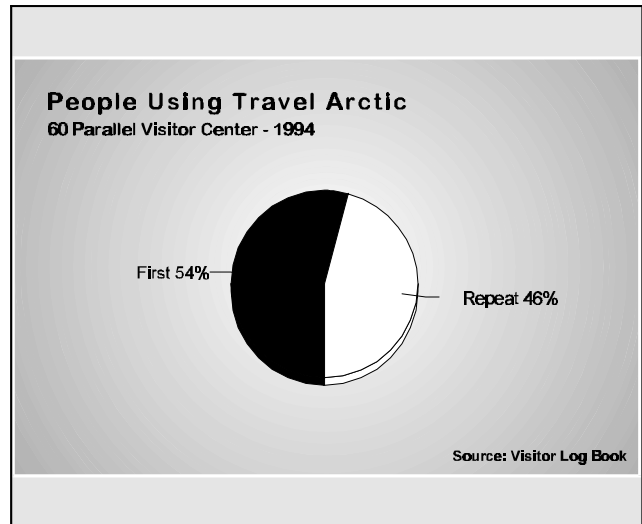
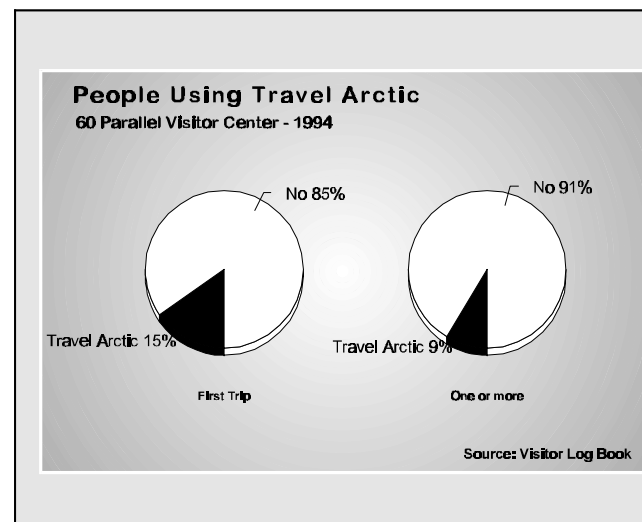


Figure 9



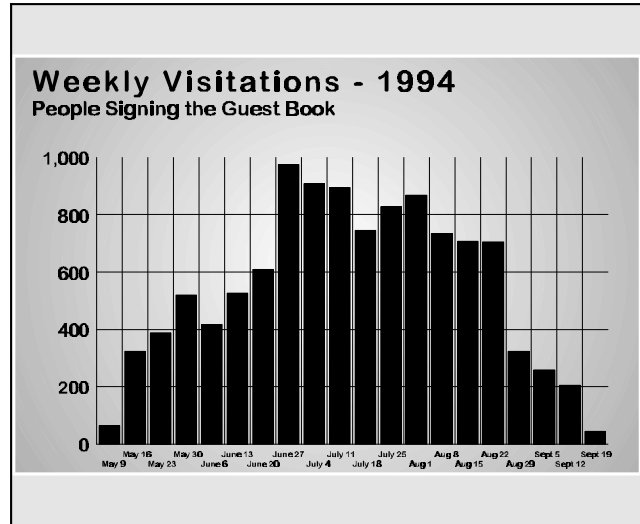
## Seasonal Variations

Figure 10 shows weekly visitations to the 60th Parallel Visitor's Center. As shown in the chart, the season begins to really start in early May. Visitation peaks during late June, and continues at high level until the end of August. Starting in September, visitations decline rapidly until the center closes near the end of the month.

## Statistical Tables

Three sets of detailed tables are included. The first table summarizes total visitations by origin of the traveler. Table 2 outlines the reason for travel. Table 3 tabulates the results by destination; note that tabulating results by destination is difficult due to the random nature of responses. The latter table may also underestimate secondary destinations; for example, visitors might record Yellowknife as their primary destination even though they plan to visit Wood Buffalo Park.

Figure 10















# Notes

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## EXTRA, EXTRA ... READ ALL ABOUT IT!

***For additional information on tourism or statistics on visitor information centers, including a recently completed cost benefit study, return or fax this coupon to:***

- Policy & Planning
- Economic Development & Tourism
- Government of the NWT
- Box 1320
- Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9
- Fax: (403) 873-0434
- Or phone: (403) 873-7272

### **Additional data on 60th Parallel trends**

Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	

**Cost/Benefit Analysis of Parks and Visitor Centers**