

State Football Finals Give DeKalb County An Estimated \$1 Million Economic Boost

By [JENNA DOOLEY](#) • 2 HOURS AGO WNIJ - NORTHERN PUBLIC RADIO



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DeKalb County officials tallied up the economic impact of the state football championships, and they are happy with the results.

DeKalb hosted the games over Thanksgiving weekend at Northern Illinois University's Huskie Stadium. The championship match-ups featured 16 teams from around the state, including Batavia, Pleasant Plains, and Rochester.



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Estimates show there were nearly 500 booked hotel rooms in DeKalb and Sycamore, an increase from the last time the city hosted the event two years ago. There were another 140 hotel rooms booked in Rochelle.

25,197 tickets were sold for the games, an increase of about 3,000 from 2015. Local restaurants reported an average 30% increase in sales.

Debbie Armstrong, executive director of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau, says one factor is that some of the same teams made it back to the finals.

“They have explored the community a little bit more,” she said. “They are more familiar with our hotel situation and they really know more about our community. They are familiar with Northern and the campus now.”

She says good weather and large fan bases also contributed to the economic increases.

Hundreds of volunteers served as “tourism ambassadors” during the event.

Using numbers the Illinois Office of Tourism provides to gauge the economic impact of sporting events, Armstrong estimates the economic impact from the weekend to be about \$1 million. This includes direct and indirect spending on hotels, food, gas, facility rental, tent suppliers, catering and other services provided by people taking part in or attending the event.

The finals were first held in DeKalb in 2013. Champaign’s Memorial Stadium hosts the event in even-numbered years.

<http://northernpublicradio.org/post/state-football-finals-give-dekalb-county-estimated-1-million-economic-boost>