

# **Local economic impacts of golfing:**

## **A case study of the Luck Golf Course in Polk County, Wisconsin**

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### **Executive Summary**

Golfing is a significant outdoor recreation activity in the state of Wisconsin. This case study of the Luck Golf Course is a planning exercise that focuses on recreation spending as a form of economic development for the Village of Luck. Our intent with this applied research was to identify characteristics of golfers at the Luck Golf Course to assist golf course management and local development planners in exploring opportunities to strengthen the golf course's economic influence in the community. In this report, we specifically focus on golfer characteristics, spending patterns, and satisfaction level data collected from a survey of randomly selected Luck Golf Course users during the 2010 season. It is our hope that results can be useful to inform future planning and economic development strategies.

In order to identify how the data can be used to inform planning decision, a literature review was conducted that focused on issues of golfer characteristics, spending patterns, and satisfactions level. This information provided the capacity to use the data collected as a means to identify potential planning opportunities. The key findings include; an older and affluent core of golfers, trip spending levels below the state average, and high satisfaction levels of the golf experience at the Luck Golf Course. These findings provide the starting point to begin the development of planning strategies to increase the economic role of Luck Golf Course in the community.

The following highlights some specific findings:

- Literature suggests that high golfer satisfaction levels correlate positively with intention to return.
- Average trip spending for a golf outing was \$251.37 in the state of Wisconsin and \$351.70 in the state of Minnesota.
- A large number of golfers at the Luck Golf Course are seasonal residents or visitors to the area.
- The average age of Golfers at Luck Golf Course was 56 years old and the average income was between \$100,000 and \$150,000.
- Motivating factors to visit of Luck Golf Course patrons included quality of the course and price of greens fees.
- The course conditions were viewed to be satisfactory and the golf green conditions were rated as the highest performing component of the golf course.
- Golfers strongly agreed that the Luck Golf Course was a good value.

- Golfers visiting the Luck Golf Course were, on average, very likely to return.
- The average trip spending for golfers visiting the golf course was \$230.00 (\$71.37 in Village of Luck).
- Expansion of individual spending pattern suggest a total annual golf trip spending value of \$2,491,820 (\$773,231 in the Village of Luck) by patrons of the Luck Golf Course.
- When applied to an input-output model of Polk County, golfer spending was linked to just over \$3.1 million in regional output; reflective of an output multiplier of 1.26.
- Several suggestions exist for improving the ability of the Luck Golf Course to serve as an economic development mechanism for the Village of Luck and the Polk County region.
- Of the community and tourism attributes in the area none were identified by golfers as being particularly important or performing significantly high. Some that performed well and valued as fairly important were job opportunities, local officials, and bicycle shops/repair. An area that could use improvement was festival events which golfers found important but lagged in performance.
- Golfers were neutral on the idea of raising greens fees to pay for increased cost associated with improvements and maintenance.

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### **Introduction and research overview**

The recession of 2008 & 2009 has created fiscal strain on many, if not all, municipal units of government. As a result, the re-evaluation of public fiscal positions (revenues and expenditures) comes as no surprise. Public spending and resulting fee revenue for parks and recreation are important components of public budgets that are not immune from the effects of budget shortfalls. This is especially true for smaller municipalities with constrained tax bases; and particularly for those who support municipal golf courses. In addition to direct fiscal impacts, golf courses also serve as important amenities that create local quality of life for residents and serve as attractions for visitor spending. As local elected officials, municipal employees, and development professionals examine creative ways to generate local income and trim costs, a clearer picture of the economic role of a golf course in the community can help make better, more informed, decisions. This report is intended to help identify the function and economic role of a municipal golf course within local community development efforts.

Our research problems exist broadly within the scope of recreation management, leisure science, and amenity driven rural development. Specific research questions upon which this work rests are multi-faceted and focus on characteristics and local impacts of municipal golf course users. For instance, who are golfers and what are characteristics of their visit? How much do they spend in and around local communities? What motivates them; both to spend money and return to the area on repeat visits? How well does the golfing experience satisfy the expectations of golfers? How do golfers perceive the attributes of the local community that are relevant to their golfing experience?

How does golfer spending stimulate local economic characteristics? These represent the primary research questions addressed in this report.

In order to answer these questions, we have written this report to build on a review of the existing literature, develop a case study survey of golfers, and explain results of regional economic modeling as investigative tools. Our case study focuses on developing an understanding of user characteristics of the Luck Golf Course in Polk County, Wisconsin. We surveyed a random sample of individual Luck Golf Course golfers during the 2010 season for attributes of their visit, patterns of spending, and satisfaction levels. This information was then used to estimate economic impacts both within the community of Luck and in the broader Polk County region. In addition, we used this information to identify potential planning opportunities for economic development that exist for the community.

Specific objectives guiding our work include development of (1) golfer visitor profiles for general marketing efforts, (2) understanding of golfer satisfaction and perceived value, (3) integration of golfer perceptions regarding locally available amenities and services for improved local public decision making, and (4) estimation of economic linkages and local community development effects associated with golf course usage.

### **Outline of report**

In this report, we review the existing literature and provide background information on the regional characteristics of golfing as an industry, describe the survey and economic impact modeling efforts, summarize results, and draw conclusions about potential planning and public policy implications. This report is organized into five subsequent sections. We begin with a review of the existing literature on golfing as a recreational phenomenon. Following this, we provide several metrics that highlight golf in Wisconsin. The next section describes the survey effort and its results. These results are then used to estimate

the local economic impacts of the Luck Golf Course on the Polk County economy. Finally, we conclude with implications that can be inferred from the research findings.

### **Review of the literature**

Evaluating the economic impacts of recreation and tourism at the community level in Wisconsin has been well documented.<sup>1</sup> This is part of a process that places importance on further developing an understanding of social and economic relationships of amenity-based activities and local communities. Golf as a recreational outlet is an economic driver that accounted for \$76 billion in spending on goods and services in 2005 across the United States with an average trip spending for a golf outing being \$451.75 (SRI International, 2008). As outdoor recreation is concerned, golfers tend to represent a more affluent visitor group characterized by relatively high levels of leisure spending.

The type of visitor that golf attracts can be summed up as a wealthier individual who generates high per capita revenues as part of their visit (Mintel International Group Ltd., 2006). These golfers are highly sought after customers. As competition among travel destinations increase, the importance of identifying the factors that attract and retain golfers likewise increases (Petrick, 2002). This justifies the development of marketing research to better understand existing groups of golfers and identify characteristic factors that attract and retain them. What this means for economic planning strategies is best summed up by the following statement:

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Wisconsin System has had ongoing tourism and recreation applied research programs for the past 50 years. The interested reader is referred to a bibliographic clearinghouse of tourism and recreation studies conducted throughout Wisconsin and elsewhere (direct your browser to: <http://urpl.wisc.edu/people/marcouiller/projects/clearinghouse/index.html>).

*“... (by) better understanding the purchasing behavior of golf travelers, destination marketers and managers of tourism-related supply components (i.e., golf courses, hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc.) will be better equipped to develop more appropriate marketing strategies and tailor their products and services to attract new golf travelers to their destinations, while building a repeat business among existing clientele.”*

(Hutchinson, Lai, & Wang, 2009, p. 299)

There is significant literature that deals with individual satisfaction levels and its relation to the likelihood of return. This is true for golfers as reflected in a study by Petrick & Backman (2002b) where they showed high positive correlation between golfer satisfaction and intentions to revisit. Likewise, empirical research by Yoon & Uysal (2003) further suggest that satisfaction and repeat visits are attributed to factors such as motivation to visit and expectations of the destination. This underscores the role marketing research and subsequent recreation planning play in developing operational golf and community development strategies. Satisfaction can be attributed to the appearance of building facilities, course conditions, community attributes, and other elements that contribute to the perceived value of visitation. Perceived value has been defined as *“the consumers overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Zeithamal, 1988, p. 14).”* How perceived value relates to golfer spending has been examined by Petrick & Backman (2002a) who suggest that *“results indicate that perceived quality leads to perceived value, which leads to purchase intentions.”*

Do golfers characteristics help predict perceived value levels? One consideration that has shown to influence perceived value is age. Older golf participants are more likely of having lower perceived value scores (Petrick, Beckman 2002a). Understanding the typical demographic of various golf course

types can provide information on how much effort and resources should be focused on improving experience for a particular segment of golfers.

Characteristics associated with spending levels are not evenly distributed across all golfer demographic groups. High golf spenders are also associated with high levels of spending on gaming and entertainment (Amir et al., 2010). High spenders often tend to spend longer amounts of time at destinations. The high spender also tends to be a more experienced golfer who plays more rounds per year, has a larger number of trips, and plays at more courses (ibid). One drawback to the high golf spender is that they tend to be the least locationally stable patron, with light spenders being slightly more reliable. It may provide solace to know that medium spenders tend to be the most stable of the groups (ibid).

The use of satisfaction levels and golfer characteristics can be used to inform the strategies of a golf manager or a planner in attracting golf travelers. Questions should be asked about the level of satisfaction and perceived value of the golfing experience. This research suggests that it would be in a golf course or municipalities' best interest to improve the perceived value of a golf course before exploring more elaborate economic planning strategies.

### **Golfing in Wisconsin**

The economic impact of outdoor recreation in general and golfing specifically is of significant importance to the State of Wisconsin. Wisconsin is located in a broader region (including Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois) that can attribute roughly \$62 billion annually in economic impact from outdoor recreation activities such as bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting, paddling, snow sports, trails, and wildlife viewing (Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2006). Much of demand can be attributed to the large and affluent populations of the Twin Cities (Minneapolis-Saint Paul), Chicago, Milwaukee

and smaller metropolitan regions of the Lake States. A breakdown of outdoor recreation spending can be found in Table 1. Data found in this Table represent outdoor recreation spending in the region including Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. It is important to note that within this region, the spatial distribution of golf is not even. Further examination in Wisconsin can provide an increased explanation of those potential economic impacts that golf can have on a community.

**Table 1. Economic contribution by outdoor recreation activity in Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois (spending is in the millions).**

Camp-Based Recreation	\$23,031
Bicycle-Based Recreation	\$17,024
Golf	\$8,732
Fishing	\$5,066
Wildlife Viewing	\$4,242
Trail-Based Recreation	\$3,406
Hunting	\$3,293
Paddle-Based Recreation	\$3,120
Snow-Based Recreation	\$2,771

\* (Outdoor Industry Foundation, 2006)

When people think of golf as a significant part of a states' tourism sector, would not be uncommon to think of places like Arizona, Florida and other states with year-around draw. In a state like Wisconsin outdoor recreation activities other than golf, would be viewed as real economic drivers. However, in comparing the economic footprint of golf to other outdoor recreation activities, it is possible to see just how important golf is to Wisconsin. As illustrated in Table 1, golf is the 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest economic contributor of outdoor recreation activities in the region. This economic assessment includes, but is not limited to various trip

related expenses, gear, and fees/passes. A portion of the economic impact that can often separate golf from the other outdoor recreation activities industries is the opportunities golf provides for real estate development. In Wisconsin, real estate development accounts for about 4.9% of the total golf economy (SRI International, 2010). So if you were to exclude the economic impacts of real estate development, golf is still going to be one of largest grossing recreation industries.

A comparison of Wisconsin to its' neighboring states of Illinois and Minnesota further illustrates the value of the golf economy in the state. While Wisconsin tends to be a more rural state than its' Lake States neighbors, it does have significant hospitality/tourism related spending and relatively more golf trips when compared to Minnesota and Illinois. Data supporting this statement is summarized in Table 2. Wisconsin also can boast a higher number of courses per person than both Minnesota and Illinois. Trip spending for Wisconsin falls in between that of Illinois and Minnesota. This information is important to understanding Wisconsin's role as a supplier of golf for its two neighboring states as well as its' own residents. Wisconsin can be said to offer less expensive golf in terms of trip spending and more destinations from which to choose.

**Table 2. How Wisconsin stacks up to its neighbors.**

	Population*	Total Courses	Course/1,000 People	Golf Trips	Golfer Trip Spending
Wisconsin <sup>1</sup>	5,686,986	462	0.81	1,623,658	\$251.37
Illinois <sup>2</sup>	12,830,632	654	0.51	1,025,000	\$212.22
Minnesota <sup>3</sup>	5,303,925	425	0.80	1,569,282	\$351.70

1 (SRI International, 2010)

2 (SRI International, 2009)

3 (SRI International, 2007)

\* (United States Census Bureau, 2010)

It is relatively intuitive that the golf industry in Wisconsin is reaping the benefits of having two major metropolitan areas (Chicago and Minneapolis-St

Paul) in such close proximity. Minnesota and Wisconsin do have very similar numbers of golf trips and number of courses per person, with level trip spending setting the two apart. This is an interesting piece of information in that it puts an average golf trip in Wisconsin to be \$100 less expensive. Further understanding what determines average trip spending better allows you to gauge golfer characteristics. For example in Wisconsin the typical day trip results in an average trip spending level of \$57.96, while an overnight trip results in an average of \$441.56 (SRI International, 2010). An understanding of the regional golf industry provides a base point of assessment that can be used by golf managers, marketers, and recreation planners.

Further evaluation of the golf industry will help identify where golf recreation occurs in the Badger state. A breakdown of golf courses across the state by type is summarized in Table 3. The state’s majority of golf course supply comes from semi-private golf courses. These semi-private golf courses are privately owned facilities that are open to general public. Between private clubs, semi-private clubs, and resort courses, private industry is meeting much of the golf demand in the state. With resort courses and private courses inaccessible to many golfers there still is a significant number of golfing option provided by the municipal and semi-private courses.

**Table 3. Golf facilities in Wisconsin, 2008.**

Private	78
Semi-Private	303
Municipal	67
Resort	14
Total	462

(The PGA of America, 2008)

Golf courses are not evenly distributed across Wisconsin. The use of recreational location quotients (RLQ) as a measure for comparison furthers an understanding of golf course supply across the state. By providing a comparative spatial metric, an RLQ can take county level data and be interpreted to reflect comparisons of local supply with the state as a whole. While primarily a descriptive measure it has value in identifying how local supply compares with the state. The definition used in this report is from Marcouiller et al. 2009. An RLQ is a measure of the relative difference in regional recreational characteristic as compared to some reference region (as shown for Wisconsin in Figure 1).

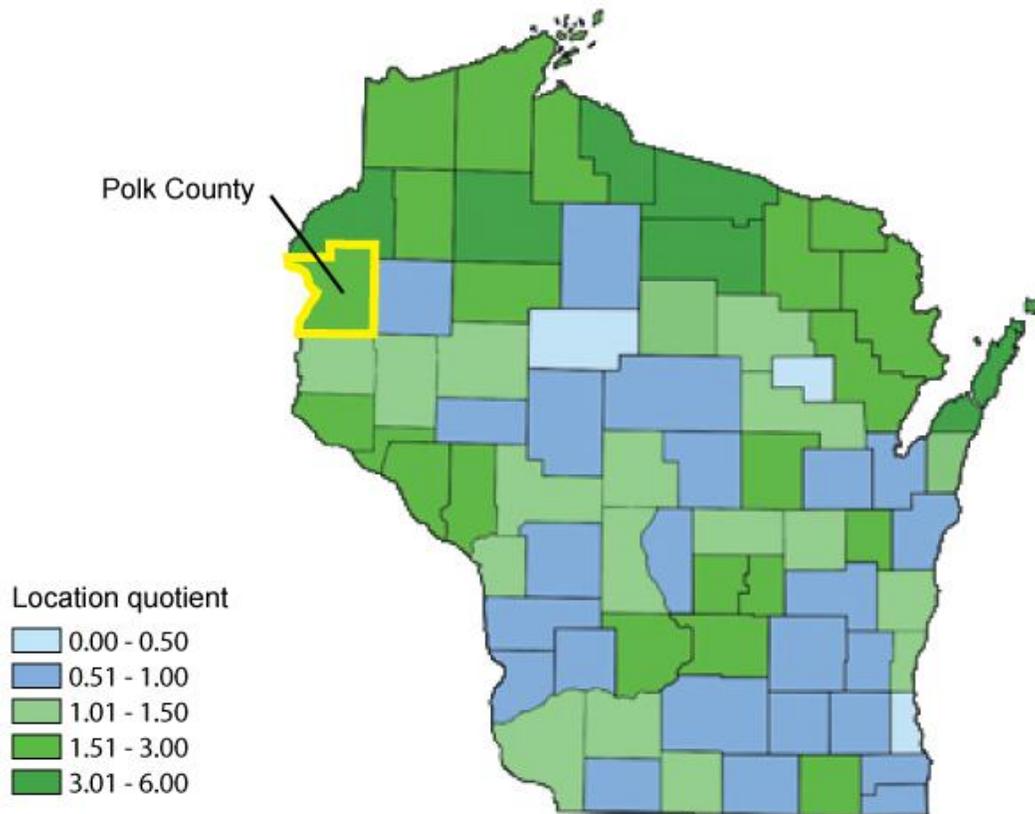


Figure 1. Golf Courses in Wisconsin as indexed using population-based recreation location quotient  
\*Herreid, Marcouillier, Prey, 2003

Golf course RLQs at the county level for the state of Wisconsin are shown in Figure 1 and provide one measure of their spatial distribution across the state. Those familiar with the geographic regions of Wisconsin can easily identify and make connections to the RLQ and regional recreational characteristics. As illustrated, much of the Northwoods of Wisconsin has an RLQ value above 1.51. As a major provider of other outdoor recreational opportunities for the state, the Northwoods is a significant supplier of golfing. It is also possible to see that Lake Geneva, Door County, and Madison/Wisconsin Dells as other destination places that are important for supplying golfing opportunities. Polk County has an RLQ in the 1.51 to 3.00 range as a result of its low resident population relative to its number of golf courses

### **Case Study of the Luck Golf Course**

In this section, we highlight the methods used in the intercept and mail survey of Luck Golf Course patrons and results of this effort. Results are discussed in three primary components; golf course perceptions, assessment of golf course related amenities, and local fiscal ability. These components reflect our primary objectives and present comprehensive description of the data collected.

#### **Survey methods**

The Luck Golf Course operated by the Village of Luck in Polk County Wisconsin is a municipal course with 18 holes and operates seasonally from late spring to the first snow in fall. The village, with a population of 1,119, draws visitors from much of the surrounding area as well as the Minneapolis and Saint Paul metro, which is approximately 70 miles away. In 1988 the course was expanded to its current 18 holes as a result of a donation of land with a purpose to expand to a second 9 holes (Luck Golf Course 2011). More recently the course has seen a series of investment efforts which include a 2005 cart path

reconstruction, a 2006 remodeling of clubhouse and locker rooms, and a 2008 remodeling of pro shop and dining area. In the 2010 golf season the total number of rounds of play was 10,834.

The initial intercept process where golfers were solicited to take part in the survey began June 7 and ended October 7. The involvement in the survey was completely voluntary. There was a brief interview where basic information was collected including approximate age, sex, reason for visit, etc., as well as contact information. Using a modified Dillman approach (Dillman, 1978) the survey was then mailed to the residence of the individuals who participated in the initial intercept. The survey consisted of 32 questions and is found in Appendix C. The eligibility requirement to participate in the survey consisted of playing a round of golf at the course. The survey was to be filled out and returned by mail. A total 100 surveys were mailed out and 47 were completed and returned for a response rate of 47 percent. The data from the survey was entered into an Excel database file which was then used to analyze descriptive statistics.

### **Golf Course Perceptions**

As part of the mail survey, a number of questions were asked about a golfer's reasons for choosing Luck as their golfing destination and their perceptions about their golf outing at the Luck Golf course. The responses to these questions can help inform the golf manager and village officials about the typical preferences of the visiting golf patrons and how they evaluate the golf course performance. As noted earlier, the survey of golfers began in June and, based on a random sample of dates and times of day, allowed for a generally representative view of golf course conditions over the course of the season (through the typically wet spring and dryer summer and fall). Before the report goes into more depth on results about golfer motivations and perceptions it is helpful to identify the demographic breakdowns of Luck Golf Course golfers.

**Table 4. Resident status of 2010 golfer sample.**

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Year-round resident of Luck	5 (10.6%)
Polk or Burnett County (Non-Luck) Resident	6 (12.8%)
Seasonal Resident of Polk or Burnett County	14 (29.8%)
Visitor to Luck	16 (34.0%)
No Answer	6 (12.8%)

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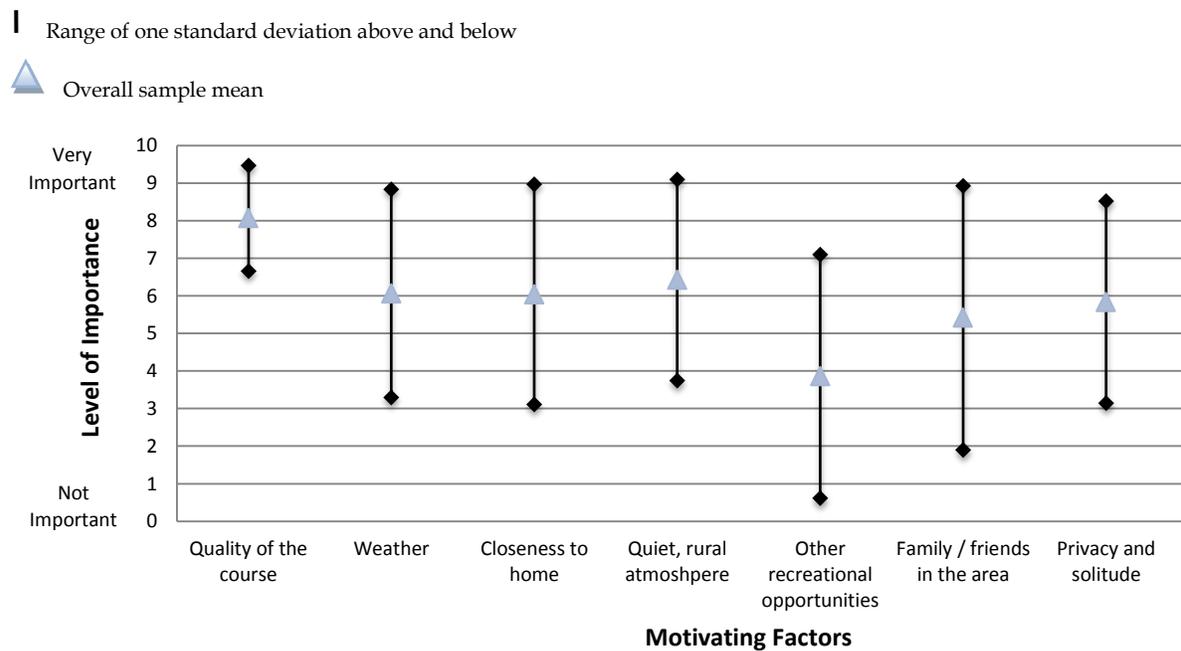
(Luck Golf Course Survey Data, 2010)

While not all the demographic information is necessary in determining golfer characteristic, some of the basics can provide an insightful description into the typical golfer at Luck Golf Course. The survey group breakdown by gender consisted of 32 men, 7 females and 8 respondents who choose not to answer. The median household income of the group was within the range of \$100,000 to \$150,000. The average age of the respondents was 56.3 years old, while the median age was 58. The average number of years of school completed was 16.25, which would equate to a bachelor's degree. A more telling piece of information can be seen in Table 4 on residential status. The information shows that 30 of the 40 respondents are not permanent residents of the area. A further descriptive statistic that can contribute to characterizing the course's golfers is the number of rounds played a year. Question 10 in the survey asks golfers approximately how many rounds they play a year and the most common answer was more than 30 rounds, signaling quite a large group of avid golfers. The overall demographic appeared to signify a group of golfers who are relatively affluent, educated, older men, frequent golfers, who are from outside of the area. This information can be helpful in drawing conclusion from further findings.

Golfers were motivated to visit the Luck Golf Course for a number of reasons. Eight of these motivating factors selected to reflect the typical reasons for golfer visits to Luck. These motivating factors were identified in the mail survey and participants were asked to rank each factor's importance to their

visit. Responses to this question are summarized in Figure 2. The responses to the scale of importance range from zero to ten. The average values of the responses are represented by a blue triangle and the variation in responses is symbolized by the black lines which represents one standard deviation above and below.

**Figure 2. Trip motivation of Luck Golf Course patrons.**



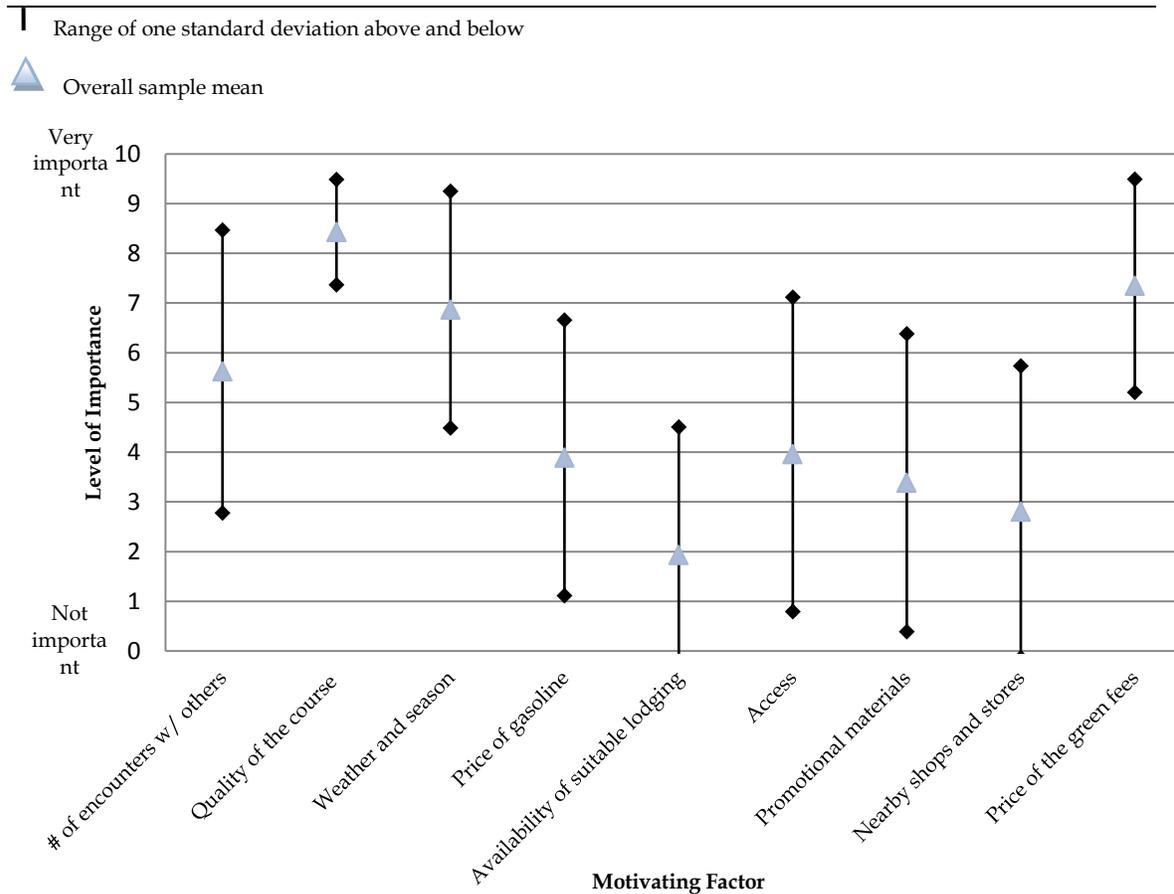
The golfer response identifies that one of the motivating factors is significantly more important than the rest. The quality of the course does not only have the highest mean value for importance, but it also has the closest range in responses. This suggests that quality of the course is not only the most important motivating factor, but also the most agreed upon. On the opposite end of the spectrum, “other recreational opportunities” had the lowest level of importance, with nearby natural features following it closely. The other motivating factors average level of importance hover around the same value. All

of these responses have a large variation in the response values. This variation would suggest that there is not a true consensus on the level of importance that is representative of the typical Luck Golf Course visitor for the other motivating factors. Note that not one of these motivating factors is shown to have an average value that is of significantly low level of importance, meaning that each category can contribute as a motivating factor to attract golfers. The take away message should be that the quality of the course is a primary motivating factor attracting golfers.

By contrast to examining motivating factors for a golf trip, the examination of factors affecting golfer return can illustrate another aspect affecting golfer perceptions about their visit. Golf managers and village officials can use this information to identify potential areas to further evaluate performance. The survey respondents were asked to rank the importance of nine factors affecting their return. Survey responses to factors affecting their return are summarized in Figure 3. In this Figure, results suggest that the most important factor affecting return is the quality of the course. This is followed by the price of greens fees. When you compare the two responses you can see that variation in the response values show that the consensus among the survey responders is slightly higher for the quality of course than price of greens fees. In comparing response results from Figures 2 and 3, it becomes clear that the quality of the course is a priority for golfers. Weather and season is identified as the third most important factor affecting return to the Luck Golf Course, but it the factor of number of encounters with others that might be the next important factor to consider. A golf course manager cannot affect changes in weather of seasons, but they can address the pace of play that would address issues of encountering other golfers. Pace of play is an important issue that affects the golfing experience and is controlled through timing of golfer tee times and regulating golfer progress (as well as personal golfing etiquette and other

elements outside of the controls of course management). Further assessment of this is summarized in Figure 4.

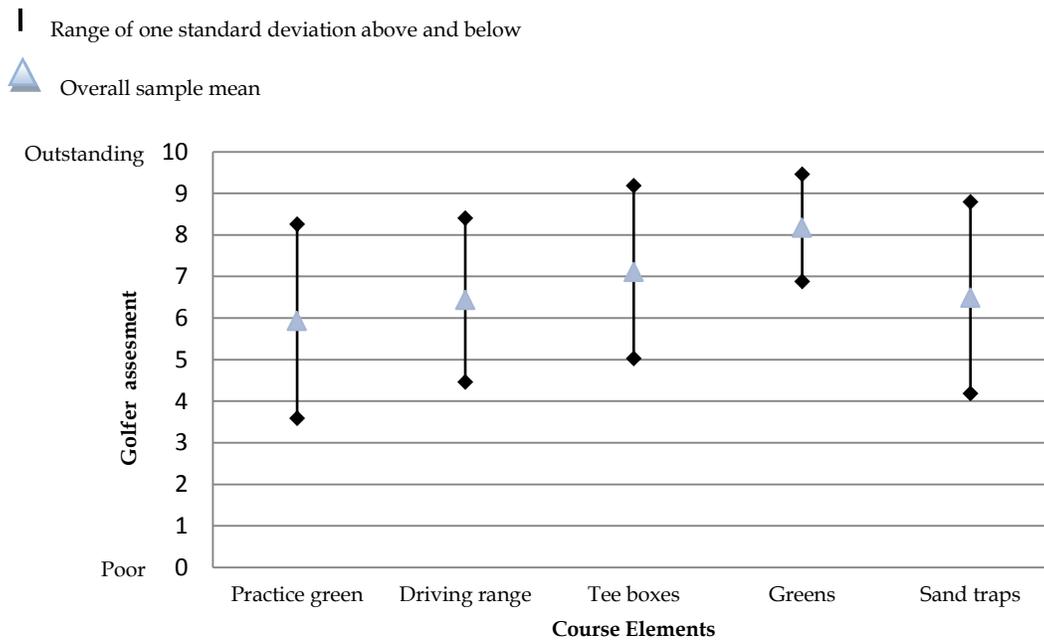
**Figure 3. Factors affecting golfer return to Luck Golf Course.**



The rest of the categories affecting golfer return to Luck have average response values that would start to suggest they are not as important. These tend to be secondary amenities that are related to golf tourism. The availability of suitable lodging has an average response value of less than two with the one-up standard deviation ranging to values less than five. The price of gasoline has a low level of importance as a factor affecting return. If compared with the lowest rated motivating factor from Figure 2 (other recreational opportunities), they have a similar average, but the variation in responses are slightly less for the

factor of gasoline price. As a whole this Figure illustrates a breakdown between factors directly related to the golf experiences and secondary factors associated with golf trip. The factors directly related to the golf experience are identified by the survey respondents to be more influential in affecting their return the Luck Golf Course.

**Figure 4. Golfer assessment of Luck Golf Course, course conditions.**



The importance of the quality of the course becomes quite obvious as illustrated in the previous two Figures. Course condition refers to the state of the components that make up the anatomy of a golf course. For our work reported here, this includes the practice facilities, tee boxes, greens and sand traps. Golfers and golf course superintendents often report that of the all golf course parts, condition of the greens is paramount to a quality round of golf. The number of complaints a golf course superintendent has is often inversely proportional to the good condition of the greens and how well the balls roll near the hole.

Survey participants were asked to assess the condition of elements of the golf course. The survey participants were asked to rate each element on a zero to ten scale with zero being poor and ten being outstanding. The respondents' results are summarized in Figure 4. Condition of the greens was rated with an average response value just above eight. Results for this response also exhibited the least amount of variance. These high marks for the green conditions are a good thing to see from golfers. The other elements assessed by the golfers are all relatively close together with the average assessment values ranging from just below six to slightly above seven. While there appears to be some room for improvement for these elements of the golf course they are all viewed as generally positive. The survey respondent assessment of the practice green would have undoubtedly been improved with this last spring's (2011) reconstruction efforts complete. The variation of the survey respondent's assessments across the course elements was relatively similar, with the standard deviation value of about two. This would suggest that there is slightly more consensus among golfers about course conditions that existed with trip and return motivating factors as shown in Figures 2 and 3 where standard deviation value was slightly more than 3.

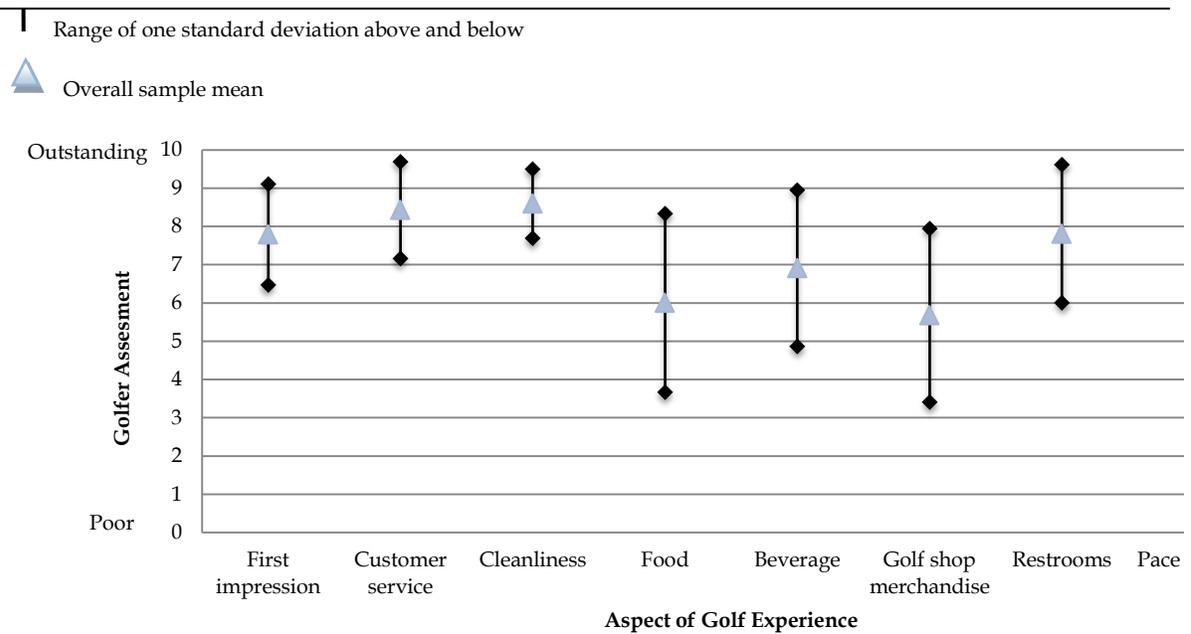
With an overall positive assessment of course conditions, the Luck Golf Course is poised to take advantage of the survey respondent's emphasis on course quality. This should allow for the course to address both the trip and return motivating factors identified as important by the survey respondents.

The course conditions are not the only aspect of the golfing experience that can be evaluated as a mean for golf managers and village officials to make more informed decisions. A number of aspects that affect the golfing experience are associated with the hospitality side of the golf course. The assessments of these aspects can provide insight into opportunities to make improvements that do not require as much capital as a course reconstruction or facility upgrades.

As part of the mail survey participants were asked to evaluate eight aspects of the golf course's hospitality side. Results for these areas of assessment are summarized in Figure 5. Survey respondents were asked to evaluate each component on a scale of zero to ten with zero being poor and ten being outstanding. The overall assessment of these was very positive across the spectrum. While the survey respondents assessed the golf shop merchandise as the lowest, it still had a relatively positive value just below six. Food and beverage also scored slightly lower than the rest of the categories, but the average value from survey respondents was still positive.

The assessment of the course cleanliness, customer service, first impression, restrooms, and pace of play all hover around the same assessment value. They also exhibited a fairly close consensus by survey respondents who feel that the golf course was doing very well in those categories. Course cleanliness was rated the highest and had the most consensus among survey respondents. As mentioned earlier when comparing results from Figure 3, the number of encounters with others was viewed as somewhat important to survey participants. The assessment of the pace of play by survey respondents was very positive with an average assessment value of about eight. The Luck Golf Course appears to provide a golfing experience where pace of play would complement golfers who are concerned with encountering too many people.

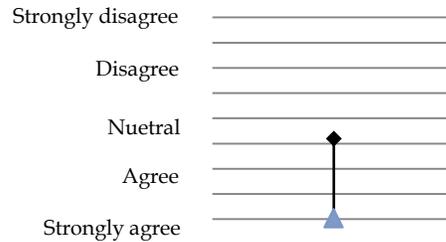
**Figure 5. Perceptions of Luck Golf Course experience.**



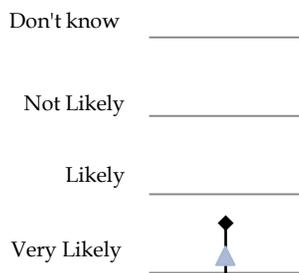
As the information in the literature review suggested, perceptions of the golfers about value and satisfaction levels are important to both trip spending and likelihood to return. All of the previous survey questions and responses, in some way or another, contributed to both perceived value and satisfaction levels. While perceived value is a combination of course conditions, pace of play, greens fees, and overall course enjoyment, there is no magic formula to determine it for a golfer. The same can be said of both trip and return motivating factors that are related to a golfer's decision to make the Luck Golf Course their golfing destination. Both questions need to be asked; does the golfer feel they received a good value and is the golfer likely to return?

The survey did just that by asking the survey respondents if they felt they received a good value. Responses to the statement, "I feel I received a good value at the Luck Golf Course" are summarized in Figure 6. Survey respondents answered by choosing from the options of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Each of these word choices was associated with a number value, one being strongly agree and five being strongly disagree. The average values of the responses are represented by a blue triangle and the variation in responses is symbolized by the black lines which represents one standard deviation above and below. Survey respondents overwhelmingly selected strongly agree. The variation of answers identified through one standard deviation above, still remains to be positively correlated with golfer perceptions that they received a good value. This information should provide encouragement and foster a sense of pride to the local community that the Luck Golf Course is so highly thought.

**Figure 6. Golfer response to the statement "I feel I received a good value at the Luck Golf Course".**



**Figure 7. Golfer likelihood to return to Luck Golf Course.**



Additionally, the likelihood that the survey respondent would return to the Luck Golf Course was queried through an analogous statement. Results of this question are summarized in Figure 7. It is quite clear from the survey responses summarized in this Figure that the golfers surveyed were very much in favor of a return visit. The variation in responses is

almost nonexistent, with one standard deviation above reaching the response of likely. This is undoubtedly what any golf manager would like to see, once a golfer plays the golf course they will undoubtedly be back.

Likewise, survey results that focused on golfer perceptions about aspects of their previous golfing experience at the Luck Golf Course had similarly favorable results. Results suggest that respondents gave course quality high marks across the board with green conditions, cleanliness, and customer service standing out in survey respondent assessments. The assessment of motivating factors that affect the golfer's likelihood of return Luck Golf Course suggest the biggest influences to be quality of the course and cost of greens fees. Encouragement can be found in that respondent's perceptions about the course and items affecting return appeared to complement each other. This helps provide some reason and explanation for such a high level of likelihood to return to the Luck Golf Course.

### **Assessment of local community amenities**

As a part of the study, the mail survey was used to solicit responses to seek out how golfers viewed amenities within the local community. This data can be used to measure the relative performance and importance of the local community amenities to Luck Golf Course golfers. This section of the survey was multidimensional in the sense that each characteristic required a response with respect to its "importance" and then a follow-up response with respect to how satisfied users were with the local provision, or "performance," of each characteristic. Within the marketing and recreation assessment literature, this is known as Importance-Performance Analysis (or IPA). At its core, IPA identifies salient qualitative features and asks respondents to rate product attributes in terms of how important they were to the overall experience and how well they were performed to attain their intended outcome (Fletcher et al., 1992; Hammitt et al., 1996). This type of analysis allows for a relative array of the importance of

various recreational attributes while simultaneously assessing the relative performance, or effectiveness with which attributes are provided by golf manager or the local communities adjacent to the golf course.

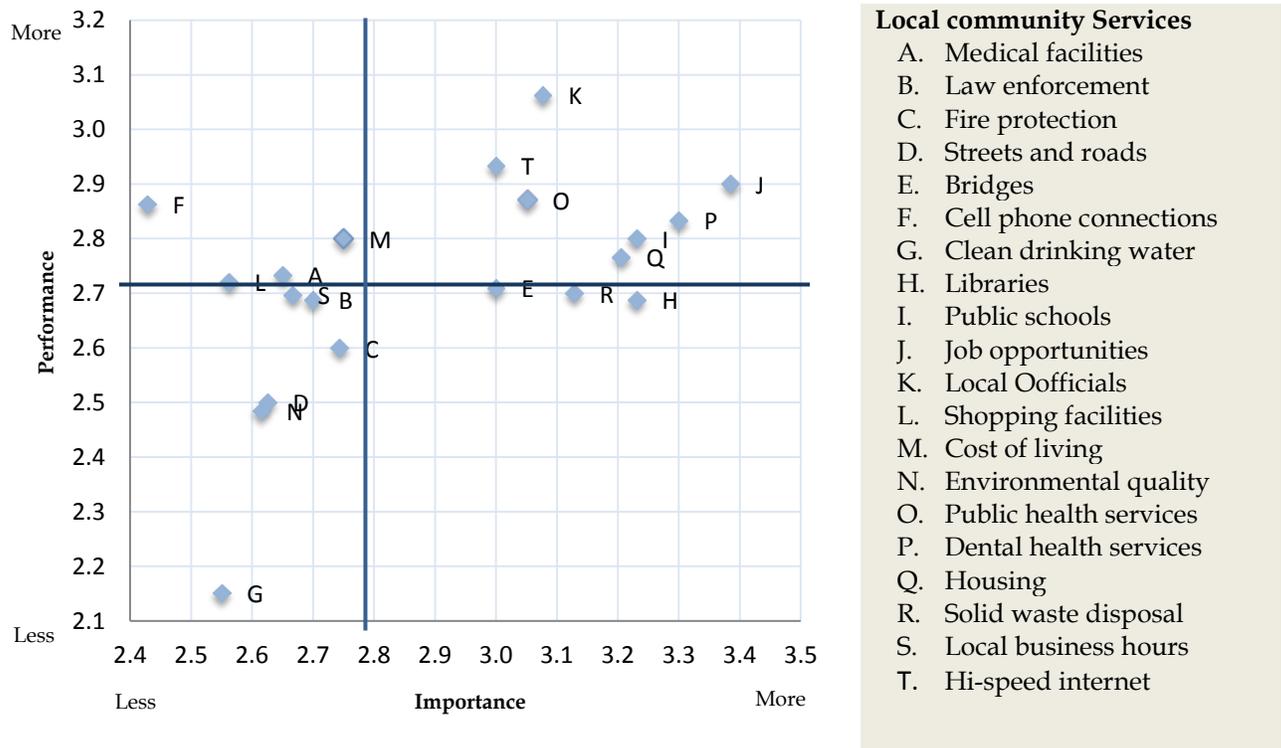
The assessment of the local community focused on two unique amenity groups: community services and tourism business as summarized in Figures 8 and 9 respectively.<sup>2</sup> Interpretation of IPA results is simplified by differentiating the four quadrants constructed using grand means (overall means for all combined characteristics) for importance and performance (denoted by the solid blue lines). Of particular interest are the patterns of response that place characteristics in the upper right quadrant (high importance and high performance). These are clearly items that are both important and well performed and can be noted as relative “successes”. The other interesting quadrant to note is the lower right (high importance and low performance). With respect to golfers, these could be noted as “areas needing improvement” as they represent characteristics that are relatively important but are generally not well performed. Note from this Figure that, overall, results suggest that trail services were most apt to be important, followed by community services. Tourism services were, in general, found to be least important. Respondents’ views of the performance of these characteristic groups did not allow for clear generalizations.

The local community services that were evaluated by the survey respondents are summarized in Figure 8. The local community services successes include public schools, job opportunities, local officials, public health services, dental health services, and high speed internet. Areas in which the community and local business could better address golfer demands would be

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<sup>2</sup> Figures 8 and 9 illustrate separate IPA results for each amenity service group. While these specific amenity service groupings are similar to previous studies (cf. Fletcher et al., 1992; Hammitt et al., 1996; Marcouiller and Mace, 1999; Marcouiller et al., 2002), these categories were developed specifically for this project and were included in a prioritization process that was largely based on local informational needs.

**Figure 8. Importance-performance results for community service amenities, as rated by Luck Golf Course patrons.**

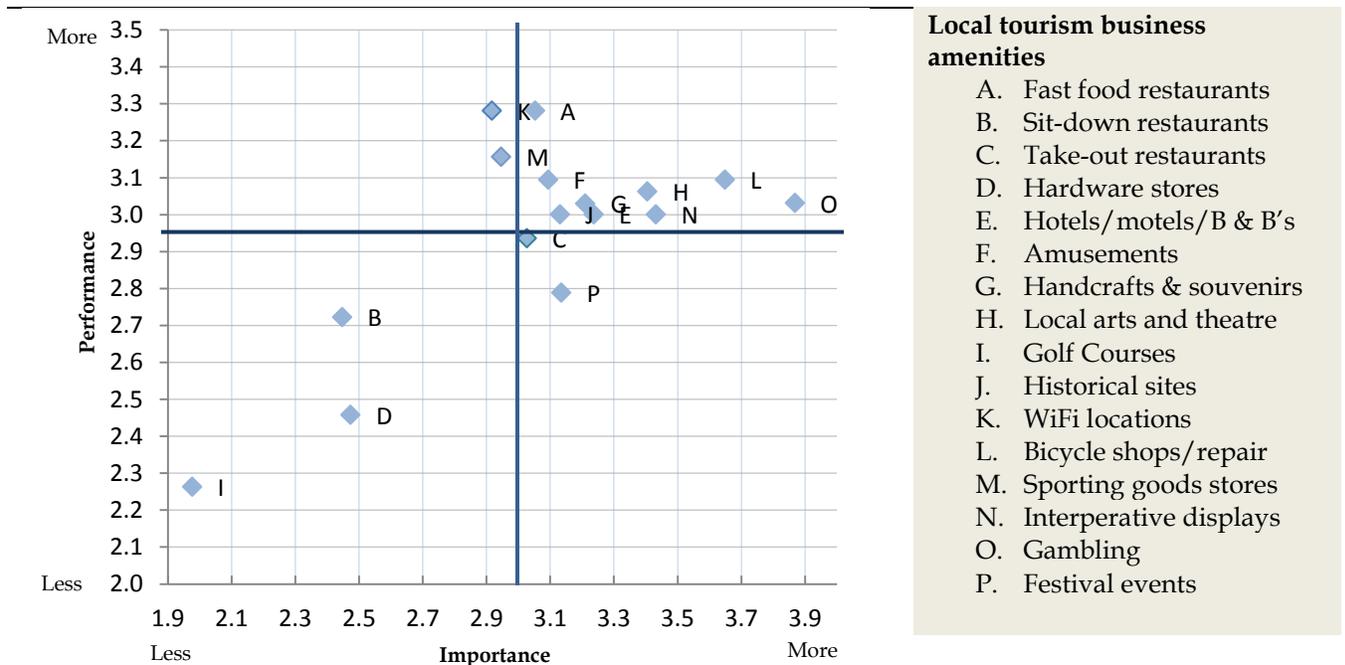


libraries, solid waste, and bridges. Two issues that might come as surprising to some include clean drinking water and cell phone connects. Clean drinking water was evaluated as performing the worst out of the group and wasn't of particular importance to survey respondents. Cell phone connections were considered the least important and were performing above average compared to the group. As a whole, no community service amenity was identified as particularly important or to be performing exceptionally well.

Survey responders were also asked to evaluate the local business community in regards to the services that are associated with tourism. The results of this IPA assessment are summarized in Figure 10. Local tourism businesses performed well as shown in the Figure's success quadrant. As you

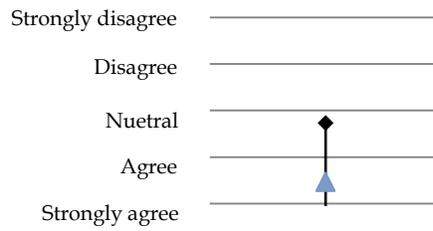
examine further you can see that a number of the amenities were very closely grouped. The issues of sit down restaurants, hardware stores and golf courses as compared to the other issues are outliers to affecting the “grand mean”. With that in mind some of the tourism business amenities that can be labeled successes include gambling, bicycle repair shops, and fast food restaurants. Some aspects of the local tourism business that could be improved include the availability of take-out restaurants and festival events. It is interesting to see that golf courses are identified as an issue that is of little importance and performing so low from a group of golfers. With the Luck Golf Course receiving general high marks and being a primary motivator for visiting the Village, other nearby courses must be contributing to perceptions of survey respondents. These results provide insight to the general service needs and performance by Luck Golf Course golfers.

**Figure 9. Importance-performance results for local tourism business amenities, as rated by Luck Golf Course patrons.**



As part of the local community service assessment, survey participants were asked to evaluate if they felt welcome in the community. These results were based on the response to the statement “I feel welcome in the Village of Luck,” and are summarized in Figure 10. Survey respondents expressed that they “strongly agreed” with this statement. The survey responders showed a great deal of consensus on this issue with one standard deviation up remaining with a positive assessment. With such a high portion of the survey respondents being visitors or seasonal residents this is a good sign for local officials.

**Figure 10. Golfer response the statement “I feel welcome in the Village of Luck”.**



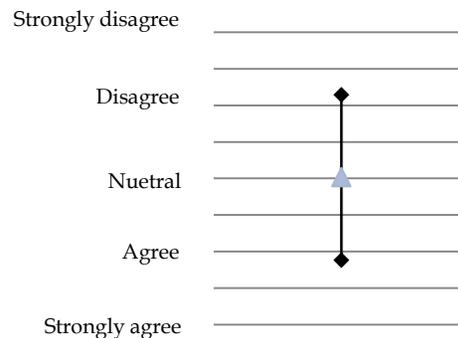
### **Local fiscal ability**

The fiscal considerations associated with operating a municipal golf course are often tied to a variety of local issues and alternative funding sources. Tournaments, daily green fees, sponsorships, membership organization, and city subsidies are just a few examples of these funding sources. With many municipalities seeing revenue shortfall, budgets are being constrained and revenue generating services like golf will likely be asked to contribute to more, if not all, of their operation cost. For golf course managers, one of the simplest forms to generate extra revenue is to raise greens fees. Golfers who participated in the survey were asked for their response to the following statement: “I don’t have a problem with the concept of increasing green fees to pay for maintenance and improvements of the Luck Golf Course”. The results from this question are summarized in Figure 11. Surprisingly golfers were relatively neutral on this with the average response being neutral. There was not a general consensus, as we can see, from the range in responses illustrated in the Figure. This could be a signal for

village officials and golf course

management who are looking for possible methods to raise revenues.

**Figure 11. Golfer response to the statement “I don’t have a problem with the concept of increasing green fees to pay for maintenance and improvements of the Luck Golf Course.**



A second metric to solicit golfer responses towards budget issues is to ask them what they would do with the village budget. In an attempt to identify golfer’s perceptions of the set of local fiscal constraints, we collected survey responses to a hypothetical scenario. This hypothetical scenario was intended to mimic the decisions local officials make within the context of local fiscal improvement or degradation. The survey participants were asked to make an allocation decision with respect to a hypothetical budget surplus or deficit. A summary of responses to these questions of how golfers, if placed in a decision-making framework, would allocate resources under conditions of local fiscal improvement (an increase in local revenues) and local fiscal decline (a drop in revenues) is shown in Table 5. The first finding that sets itself apart is that golfers would like to see taxes reduced at greater rates with budget surplus. Social services, on the other hand, were identified by golfers to be the item to increase the least in a budget surplus and decrease the most in a budget short fall. Attitudes for funding the maintenance of the golf course were comparable to other categories in a budget surplus. This table suggests that golfers put a priority on reducing taxes and maintaining education services, while not having as strong priority for social service spending.

**Table 5. Summary of responses to the allocation of local fiscal improvement (revenue increase) and fiscal decline (revenue decrease).**

Question and response category	Mean response (\$)	Standard deviation (\$)
--------------------------------	--------------------	-------------------------

*Suppose you were a local official and revenues increased by \$100 this year. How would you distribute this additional \$100 given the following choices?*

Reduce taxes	33.25	34.97
Increase spending for services (i.e., fire/police)	14.26	12.43
Increase spending for education	18.66	22.15
Increase spending for roads	14.23	10.72
Increase spending for social services	7.19	8.45
Increase spending for maintenance of the Luck Golf Course	15.68	14.83
Total	103.26	-

*Suppose that local revenues decreased by \$100 this year. If forced to balance the budget, how would you make up for the lost revenue?*

Increase taxes	19.44	32.42
Decrease spending for services (i.e., fire/police)	11.21	18.85
Decrease spending for education	5.76	10.56
Decrease spending for roads	14.13	19.42
Decrease spending for social services	26.13	28.34
Decrease spending for maintenance of the Luck Golf Course	23.63	30.67
Total	100.31	-

### **Patterns of golfer spending**

A primary objective of this research was to identify the economic impact the golf course had within the local community and its surrounding region. This was done to assist in identifying opportunities to expand the economic potential of the golf course. Specifically this survey focused on golfer spending at local businesses to gauge the economic foot print that the Luck Golf Course brings to the community. This information can assist golf course management and village officials in making better informed decisions about what current advantages exist and where more may exist.

Survey respondents were asked to recall the amount of money spent on their last trip to the Luck Golf Course. The ability to recall exactly how much money spent has its limitations and survey results are representative of this, but keep in mind these are best viewed as ball-park estimates (mail surveys were received by golfers 3-10 days after the interception on the trip). The given dollar amount they spent on their most recent trip is summarized in Tables 6 and 7. Table 6 represents the data received from survey responders of their total trip expenditures and percentage of the money spent in the Village of Luck. The survey further asked golfers to recall how much they spent at a group of local establishments found in the Village (this information is found in Table 7).

**Table 6. Trip Spending by Luck Golf Course Golfers**

	Average Individual Trip Spending		Projected Yearly Trip Spending*	
	Trip	Local	Trip	Local
Groceries/Liquor	\$47.00	\$11.25	\$509,198	\$121,883
Restaurants/Drinks	\$33.87	\$8.22	\$366,973	\$89,010
Gas, Auto Service	\$29.04	\$8.35	\$314,647	\$90,444
Recreation (golf, amusements, etc.)	\$86.04	\$43.20	\$932,185	\$468,076
Recreational Equipment	\$25.53	\$0.22	\$276,613	\$2,354
Other Retail	\$5.11	\$0.13	\$55,323	\$1,424
Casinos/Gambling	\$3.40	\$0.00	\$36,882	\$39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$230.00</b>	<b>\$71.37</b>	<b>\$2,491,820</b>	<b>\$773,231</b>

\*Based on 10,834 rounds played in 2010

(Luck Golf Course Survey Data, 2010)

Average individual trip spending found in Table 6 was used to project trip and local spending for the year by multiply average spending values by rounds played. The results in the Table show averages of each category spent on the trip. Note that over twice as much trip spending was spent outside the Village of Luck then in it. Excluding recreation which included greens fees for the golf course, spending in Luck was the highest for grocery and liquor followed by gas/auto service, and restaurant/drinks. The amount of money spent on

recreation equipment, retail, and casinos/gambling was negligible. A lack of spending in the casino/gambling category can be accounted for because of the lack of a gaming facility in the Village. It does appear that Luck is missing out on a portion of trip spending associated with recreational equipment. A total trip spending of golf outings to Luck Golf Course generated almost \$2.5 million. It is estimated that trip spending generated an additional \$305,155 for village businesses. As a whole, trip spending for an outing to Luck Golf Course was slightly less than the previously identified amount for an average golfing trip in the state of Wisconsin (which was \$251.37).

**Table 7. Average trip spending by Luck Golf Course golfers at local establishments by survey group.**

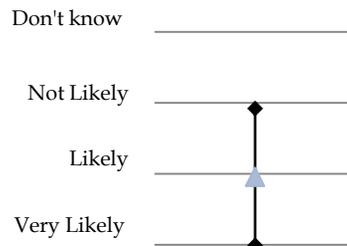
Luck Golf Course	\$77.84
Bon-Ton Saloon	\$1.11
Holiday Gas	\$16.08
Northern Bar	\$0.67
Centex Gas Station	\$2.99
Luck E. Saloon	\$1.89
Luck Country Inn	\$2.22
The Bottle Shop	\$4.78
Hog Wild Restaurant	\$5.22
Wayne's Supermarket	\$17.24
Jenell's Main Dish	\$1.78
Van Meter's Meats	\$5.22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$137.04</b>

The spending breakdown at different establishments found in the Village of Luck is summarized in Table 7. Over half of the trip spending by golfers appears to be at the golf course itself. The business with the next highest golfer trip spending amount was Wayne’s Supermarket closely matched by spending at

the Holiday Gas Station. The Bottle Shop, Hog Wild Restaurant, and VanMeter's Meats stood out as local business that receive some golfer spending.

One question was asked of survey respondents that helps frame the golf course economic impact opportunity. Golfers were asked to respond to the question, "Would you return to the Village of Luck for reasons other than golf?" The results can be found in figure 12 where the average response was likely and not a high level of consensus. One way to analyze this information is to compare the results in figure 12 to those found in figure 7, likelihood to return to the Luck Golf Course. To recall the response average in figure 7 was very likely and show strong consensus among respondents. The difference between the two figures illustrates the role that the golf course plays in attracting visitors to the Village of Luck.

**Figure 12. Golfer response to the statement "Would you return to the Village of Luck for reasons other than golf?"**



### **Translation of spending into estimates of Polk County economic impact**

The economic structure of a region is a key determinant in the extent to which impacts are felt locally. The Luck Golf Course is directly adjacent to the community of Luck. Rural communities such as Luck, Wisconsin tend to have relatively fewer local retail and service businesses in which golfers can spend their money when compared to larger community economies like St. Croix Falls or Siren. While specific community impacts and their relative differences are important, the ability to estimate regional economic impacts remains at the county-level (for this case study - Polk County). It is important to further point

out that Polk County, when compared throughout the Lake States, exists as fairly rural in its economic characteristics. Rural counties tend to have fewer local linkages for intermediate purchased inputs, or those items needed to produce the items that are sold locally. Micropolitan and metropolitan regions such as Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley or the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota tend to be relatively more robust and diverse economies with a much broader array of local retail and service businesses and a commensurately higher amount of locally available intermediate purchased inputs. In general, smaller and less diverse regional economies are relatively more dependent on the outside for the items sold by local retail and service businesses. Conversely, larger, more diverse regional economies tend to be more self-contained. Hence, multiplier impacts tend to be larger as the economic structure of a regional economy grows.

The estimation of economic impacts resulting from golfers focuses on the infusion of dollars into the communities of Polk County. Total local expenditures made by golfers are identified by local business sectors sensitive to travel expenditures in the previously described Tables 6 and 7. When we apply these dollars to an input-output model of Polk County, the multiplier effect of inter-industry purchases generates indirect impacts and the increased income of households drives induced impacts.<sup>3</sup> These impacts are summarized for output in Table 8.

It is interesting to note from Table 8 that the amount of local money spent by golfers had broader impacts on the economic structure of Polk County. This money had the effect of generating a broad amount of business activity within the region. Results of the spending shock to the input-output models suggests that the direct annual spending of golfers (of roughly \$2.5 million) generated a

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<sup>3</sup> A full description of input-output modeling as a standard method used to develop estimates of regional economic impacts is beyond the scope of this report but is readily available in standard textbooks on the topic (Shaffer et al. 2004; Chapter 15). A short primer is provided in Appendix B.

total direct, indirect and induced impacts of just over \$3.1 million throughout Polk County.

Overall, the output multiplier representative of the results reported in Table 8 (and other results was 1.26 which is modest and reflects the region’s more rural economic structure. To reiterate, the extent of multiplier impacts result from the relative diversity of each regions’ economic structure. These results are reasonable given the relative size of the regional economy.

**Table 8.** Total output (regional product) impact of trip related annual spending by Luck Golf Course users on Polk County economy (2010 dollars from model developed using MicroIMPLAN).

Industry	NAICS Code	Direct*	Indirect*	Induced*	Total*
Ag, Forestry, Fish & Hunting	11	\$0	\$11,339	\$6,959	\$18,298
Mining	21	\$0	\$657	\$301	\$958
Utilities	22	\$0	\$40,101	\$13,305	\$53,406
Construction	23	\$0	\$35,113	\$2,393	\$37,506
Manufacturing	31-33	\$0	\$51,913	\$20,731	\$72,645
Wholesale Trade	42	\$0	\$16,214	\$14,821	\$31,035
Transportation & Warehousing	48-49	\$0	\$21,835	\$7,558	\$29,392
Retail trade	44-45	\$1,029,288	\$19,854	\$58,368	\$1,107,510
Information	51	\$0	\$53,956	\$11,532	\$65,488
Finance & insurance	52	\$0	\$17,053	\$17,184	\$34,247
Real estate & rental	53	\$0	\$103,425	\$12,125	\$115,550
Professional- scientific & tech svcs	54	\$0	\$20,415	\$6,155	\$26,570
Management of companies	55	\$0	\$1,859	\$111	\$1,970
Administrative & waste services	56	\$0	\$30,921	\$5,315	\$36,237
Educational svcs	61	\$0	\$17	\$606	\$623
Health & social services	62	\$0	\$16	\$80,442	\$80,458
Arts- entertainment & recreation	71	\$910,978	\$2,770	\$5,578	\$919,326
Accommodation & food services	72	\$335,214	\$12,467	\$29,065	\$376,746
Other services	81	\$0	\$14,991	\$18,228	\$33,219
Government & non NAICs	92	\$0	\$14,926	\$82,758	\$97,685
Total		\$2,275,480	\$469,842	\$393,536	\$3,138,857

\* Based on input-output relationships of the Polk County economy as estimated using 2006 MicroIMPLAN model (available from authors). Note that some compounding and discounting elements (2006 to 2010 and vice versa) and rounding create minor conflicting results.

## **Summary, conclusions, and potential planning strategies**

During the 2010 golfing season, a case study was conducted using random samples of golfers who used the Luck Golf Course in Polk County, Wisconsin. This was combined with a literature review, additional secondary data, and an input-output model to develop estimates of characteristics of Luck Golf Course patrons and their local economic impacts. Results of this work can assist in development of planning strategies to increase the economic impact of the Luck Golf Course in the community. Our overall research objectives included an evaluation of the set of issues regarding economic impacts of the Luck Golf Course, golfer spending habits, and community development opportunities presented by golfing as an activity. Using golfer characteristics, spending habits and satisfaction levels, we are able to identify potential planning strategies that can be used to increase the economic influence of Luck Golf Course.

### **Strategies for attracting golfers**

One of the simplest ways to improve the economic impact of the Luck Golf Course would be to attract a larger amount of outside visitors. These golfers would bring in extra money from outside the community and could be likely to have return trips to the area stimulating local business through their spending. The following conclusions and strategies don't identify specific marketing ploys, but they help identify potential niche advantages inherent to the Luck Golf Courses. These advantages are what can be used as a foundation to attract and retain golfers to the community.

The demographic breakdown of the respondents during the 2010 season suggests that the course is attracting a group of affluent older men from outside the local area. The average trip spending would suggest that golf trips to Luck Golf Course result in a trip spending levels just below the State's average. More importantly it shows that the trip spending is significantly lower than in the

neighboring state of Minnesota. Local spending levels would suggest that opportunities exist to improve upon existing local trip spending levels. All of these findings should direct a planner to develop strategies which capitalize on these findings

In our work, we have identified that the quality of the golf course and the price of the greens fees were both primary motivators for golfers traveling and returning to the Village of Luck. Secondary motivators that were identified as influential to a number of the survey respondents included closeness to home, quiet rural atmosphere, and privacy and solitude. These are issues that can be used to help define the golf experience at Luck, acting as a draw. These may not necessarily be motivators for golfers who are members of the local community, but they could definitely be appealing to the golfing population found an hour and twenty minutes away in the Twin Cities.

Survey results suggested that satisfaction levels were high; golfers during the 2010 season expressed strong levels of likely return and felt welcomed by the local community. This may be attributed to the high level of perceived value as survey respondents indicated. Undoubtedly the quality of the course conditions and affordability were probably components that contributed to this perceived value. This favorable opinion of the Luck Golf Course is ideal for course management and local development planners. It allows them to focus on developing strategies to encourage more spending in the community and attract more golfers instead of putting effort into improving golfer satisfaction levels.

One planning strategy would be to capitalize on a common characteristic of the golfers at Luck Golf Course. With a significant number of older golfers who frequent Luck Golf Course, planning strategies can use that information to inform their efforts. A piece by Poudyal, Hodges, Cordell (2008) on nature based recreational facilities, specifies that a golf course can play a significant role in attracting retirees who tend not to favor densely populated areas. Further exploration of this relationship and the opportunities that exist in attracting a

demographic group that is retired or about to retire could be fruitful. If the relationship that appears to exist between high perceived value and an older golf demographic is true, this would mean that the course exhibits an advantage of attracting a niche group of golfers that can be harder to satisfy. As stated earlier older golf participants are more likely of having lower perceived value scores (Petrick, Beckman 2002a). Luck Golf Course's ability to satisfy this niche group could be used as a base upon which planning strategies can focus.

While Luck Golf Course patrons exhibit high golfer satisfaction levels, opportunities to improve that satisfaction always exist. Petrick & Backman (2002a) suggest that the best use of resources would be to increase quality of the golf course or decrease price. While respondents (as identified in Figure 11) voiced relative neutrality on raising greens fees to cover increased maintenance and improvement cost, too much of an increase could affect the perceived value. As further strategies are considered and golfer spending habits are further analyzed it is important to remember that current levels of satisfaction appeared to be tied to that concept presented by Petrick & Backman. Whether it's pursuing older golfers or partnering to increase area attractions the Luck Golf Course as well as other golf course's success will be accomplished through the ability to maintain a good perceived value. Planning strategies to increase the economic impact of the golf course should focus on the courses high perceived value as a way to draw golf travelers.

### **Strategies to increasing economic impact**

As an economic component of Luck and its surrounding region, the Luck Golf Course attracted outside dollars; an important local export. Our survey work generated estimates of golfer spending; roughly \$775,000 locally and almost \$2.5 million in total on golf outings to Luck. These numbers alone show the potential economic impact that a golf course can provide. The discrepancies in the amount suggest that there is more opportunity for the Village of Luck to

capitalize on trip spending. Increasing local spending could be accomplished by targeting the portions of trip spending that occurs more heavily outside the local community. Encouragement to support local business would complement survey respondent's agreement to the statement that "I feel welcome in the Village of Luck."

If we look at the types of goods and services on which golfers spend their money, the potential to capture more local spending becomes apparent. Spending patterns (outlined in Table 6) suggest that grocery/liquor store, restaurants, and gas/auto services are all areas where the Village of Luck has the existing capacity to capture additional trip spending. Restaurants in the local tourism business IPA (Importance-Performance Analysis) appear to suggest that the potential to capture more spending is very possible where sit-down and take-out restaurants did not perform as well as other aspects. This finding does not suggest that restaurants in the Village of Luck aren't good, but that survey respondents were not finding the Village was performing well their provision. Improvements could be made by increasing promotional material at the golf course to provide golfers with information about local restaurant options.

As mentioned previously, strategies to attract new golfers to the Luck Golf Course can take advantage of the motivating factors that were identified as significant to survey respondents. Collaboration with nearby attractions that accommodate a quiet rural atmosphere, privacy & solitude and nearby natural features could provide more options for golfers to increase the local amount of trip spending. The IPA on local tourism business also identified that golfers felt that festival events were an important attraction that could improve in performance. Such events could take advantage of the trip motivating factors like a quiet rural atmosphere and nearby natural features.

One might ask what type of customers local businesses should attempt to better capture. Our results would suggest the absence of other destination attractions and entertainment opportunities could be detrimental in attracting

the high roller. Trip spending patterns suggest that spending levels associated with entertainment and gaming are relatively low from those we encountered during the 2010 golf season. Examining opportunities to be promoted by nearby attractions could have merit in encouraging new visitors. Targeting medium spenders who are the most stable (Amir, Wang, Hutchinson, & Lai, 2010) is a strategy that would likely be worth the effort.

Municipal golf courses can serve as an attraction for visitors and provide tangible quality-of-life benefits for local residents. Enhancing their role in economic development is an important issue in enhancing future community involvement, impact, and sustainable local asset-building.

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## Appendix A

### Recreation Location Quotients

An RLQ is a measure of the relative difference in regional recreational characteristic as compared to some reference region. For recreational resources, it is simply calculated as follows (eq.1):

$$RLQ = \frac{\% \text{ resource in given locale}}{\% \text{ resources in a reference region}}$$

Specifically, the recreation location quotient is calculated as follows (eq. 2):

$$RLQ_z^i = \frac{\left(\frac{r_s^i}{pop_s^t}\right)}{\left(\frac{r_n^i}{pop_n^t}\right)}$$

Where r is the amount of recreation site capacity, i is recreation type, s is the local community, pop is population, t is total, and n is the reference region. The implications of recreation location quotient values speak to the level of excess recreation supply. The theoretical domain of a recreation location quotient extends between zero and infinity ( $0 < RLQ < \infty$ ) but in practice, the upper bound is about 50 or so. Inferences of alternative RLQ values include the following:

- RLQ = 1 → region has same proportion of recreation type i as reference region
- RLQ < 1 → region is producing less of recreation type i than reference region  
– key indicator for recreation development strategies (if appropriate)

$RLQ > 1$  → region has an excess proportion of recreation type  $i$  as compared to reference region (infers amount of non-local, or tourist, use)

$RLQ = 4$  → region has four times the level of recreation type  $i$  compared to the reference region

## Appendix B

### Estimating Economic Impacts

To develop estimates of the local economic impacts associated with golfing on the Polk County region, estimates of individual spending (once expanded to represent total visits), were used as initial stimuli for local businesses. Input-output models were constructed for the study region using the a 2006 county-level MicroIMPLAN dataset for Polk County (MIG 2011). In calculating the demand shock, 2010 spending levels were taken into account in the use of a sector-specific deflator to convert to 2006 dollars. All reports reflect results inflated back to a common 2010 reporting year using sector-specific inflation rates. A total multiplier approach was used in running the impact models. The full description of input-output modeling as a standard method used to develop estimates of regional economic impacts is beyond the scope of this report but readily available in standard textbooks on the topic (Shaffer et al. 2004; Chapter 15).

For the assessment of economic impacts resulting from golfer spending, total annual trip expenditures were allocated to seven specific industrial sectors. Each sector into which expenditures were allocated is represented by unique 3 to 6 digit NAICS codes and is specific to the sector structure of MicroIMPLAN.<sup>4</sup> Expenditure categories, IMPLAN sectors, and respective NAICS codes are summarized in Table B.1. Estimated total expenditures and the amount spent locally were summarized. Given our dataset, the total trip spending was used as the demand shock for input-output modeling.

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<sup>4</sup> While we recognize that this method of expenditure allocation could miss some sectoral groupings and/or overly simplifies the manner in which spending relates to local business receipts, we are confident that these potential problems are minor. The approach represents a valid technique used to estimate the local supply-side shocks associated with visitor spending found in other tourism impact studies.

**Table B.1.** Respective industrial sectors for expenditure patterns used to estimate regional economic impacts (IMPLAN sectors and respective 3-5 digit NAICS codes in which expenditures were allocated).

Expenditure Category:	IMPLAN Sector	NAICS Code
Grocery/liquor stores	405	445
Restaurants (eating and drinking places)	481	722
Transportation related (gas, repairs)	407	447
Recreation (golf, amusements)	478	713*
Recreation equipment	409	451
Entertainment (gambling, theatres, bowling)	478	713*
Hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, camping	479	72111/72112
Other retail	411	453

\* except 71394 and 71395

Standard categories of economic impacts included *output* (or the aggregate impact on regional economic activity), *value added* or *income* (that portion of total output that accrues locally), and *employment* (total numbers of jobs created) locally.<sup>5</sup> While we only report output in this report, further elaboration of additional economic characteristics can be obtained from the authors.

The county-level input-output model used to calculate total impacts estimated multiplier effects measured as direct, indirect, and induced impacts. These are uniquely calculated and reported for output, income, and employment. Direct effects include respective portions of the amount initially injected into the regional economy (non-local spending in the region). Indirect effects relate to inter-industry transactions resulting from the initial demand shock (direct effects). Induced effects include the increase in local income resulting from the direct and indirect effects and their subsequent effects on local consumption.

<sup>5</sup> Output includes all economic activity related to visitor spending including intermediate purchased inputs, income or value added, and imported inputs. Income most clearly reflects the impacts felt by local residents and includes four components: (1) employee compensation, (2) proprietor's income, (3) other property income, and (4) indirect business taxes. Employment measures total jobs created and includes full-time, part-time and seasonal jobs.

The extent of these round-by-round “multiplier” effects will depend on fundamental characteristics of the regional economy. In general, larger and more diverse regional economies will exhibit higher levels of economic multiplier effects. Conversely, smaller and less diverse regional economies will exhibit relatively lower multiplier effects. These economic multiplier generalizations reflect alternative levels of regional economic “leakage” and “capture”. They relate to regional export/import balances that differ by region. In general, the Polk County region is a relatively small and less diverse exurban economy that lies in close proximity to the Twin Cities, Duluth/Superior, and Chippewa Valley metropolitan areas.

NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**Luck Golf Course Study**  
University of Wisconsin – Madison/Extension

**I. About Your Most Recent Use of the Luck Golf Course:**

1. How important were the following issues in your decision to play the Luck Golf Course?

	not important			somewhat important				very important			
quality of the course	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
weather	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
closeness to home	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
quiet, rural atmosphere	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
other recreational opportunities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
family/friends in the area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
privacy and solitude	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
nearby natural features	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
other (specify _____)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Regarding the Luck Golf Course, how would you rate the following?

	poor			average				outstanding			
first impression	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
customer service	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
cleanliness	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
food	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
beverage	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
golf shop merchandise	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
restrooms	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
pace of play	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Please rank the following Luck Golf Course conditions?

	poor			average				outstanding			
practice green	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
driving range	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
tee boxes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
greens	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
sand traps	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. Please rank the following items would affect your return to the Luck Golf Course?

	not important			somewhat important				very important			
# of encounters with others	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
quality of the course itself	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
weather and season	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
price of gasoline	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
availability of suitable lodging	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
access (parking, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
promotional materials	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
nearby shops and stores	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
price of the green fees	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. How many holes of the Luck Golf Course did you normally play? \_\_\_\_\_ holes

6. On your last visit to the Luck Golf Course, approximately how much time did you spend on site? \_\_\_\_\_ hours

7. What is the likelihood you will visit the Luck Golf Course again (circle the appropriate response)?

Very Likely          Likely          Not Likely          Don't Know

8. I feel I received good value at the Luck Golf Course

strongly agree          agree          neutral          disagree          strongly disagree  
 I-----I-----I-----I-----I

9. What changes would you like to see at the Luck Golf Course (please specify):

**II. How You Impact the Local Economy:**

10. Approximately how many rounds of golf have you played in the last 12 months?

\_\_\_\_ 1-5 \_\_\_\_ 6-12 \_\_\_\_ 12-30 \_\_\_\_ 30 or more

11. What type of golf course do you tend to play?

- a) Municipal
- b) Private (Country Club)
- c) Public(not municipal)
- d) Resort (High End)

12. Do you have a season pass to the Luck Golf Course?    Yes\_\_\_\_\_          No\_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you hold a season pass, player or discount card to any other Golf Course?    Yes\_\_\_\_\_          No\_\_\_\_\_

14. How many visits have you made to the Luck Golf Course in the past 12 months?

\_\_\_\_ 0-1 \_\_\_\_ 2-3 \_\_\_\_ 4-5 \_\_\_\_ 6-7 \_\_\_\_ 8-9 \_\_\_\_ 10 or more

15. The following question pertains to your spending on items used during your most recent trip to the Luck Golf Course and the Village of Luck. Please estimate the total dollar amount spent and the portion spent in the Village of Luck. Please use the following categories for reporting spending on this trip.

	dollar amount spent during this trip away from home	percentage spent in Village of Luck
<b>EXAMPLE</b>		
<i>groceries/ liquor</i>	\$ 50	20 %
groceries/liquor	\$ _____	_____ %
restaurants/drinks	\$ _____	_____ %
gas, auto service	\$ _____	_____ %
recreation ( <i>golf, amusements, etc.</i> )	\$ _____	_____ %
recreational equipment ( <i>bikes, boats, sporting goods, etc.</i> )	\$ _____	_____ %
other retail ( <i>gifts, souvenirs, clothing</i> )	\$ _____	_____ %

casinos/gambling \$ \_\_\_\_\_ %

16. Specifically, please estimate the dollar amount spent on this trip to Luck, WI at the following establishments:

Luck Golf Course	\$ _____	Bon-Ton Saloon	\$ _____
Holiday Gas Station	\$ _____	Northern Bar	\$ _____
Centex Gas Station	\$ _____	Luck E Saloon	\$ _____
Luck Country Inn	\$ _____	The Bottle Shop	\$ _____
Hog Wild Restaurant	\$ _____	Wayne's Supermarket	\$ _____
Jenell's Main Dish	\$ _____	Van Meter's Meats	\$ _____

17. Were there any services/businesses that you could not find while in Luck, WI (please specify)?

18. Would you return to the Village of Luck for reasons other than golf?  
 Very Likely      Likely      Not Likely      Don't Know

### III. Your Attitudes About Community Issues

19. I feel welcome in the Village of Luck  
 strongly agree      agree      neutral      disagree      strongly disagree  
 I-----I-----I-----I-----I

20. Please examine the following **local services in the Village of Luck community surrounding the Luck Golf Course** and indicate both the LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE and the LEVEL OF SATISFACTION you associate with each service.

	<u>Level of Importance you place on:</u>					<u>Level of Satisfaction you experienced with:</u>				
	Very Important	Neutral	Very Unimportant	Very Satisfied	Neutral	Very Unsatisfied				
Medical Facilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Law Enforcement	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Fire Protection	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Streets & Roads	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Bridges	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Cell Phone Connections	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Clean Drinking Water	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Public Schools	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Jobs Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Local Officials	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping Facilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Cost of Living	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Environmental Quality	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Public Health Services	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Dental Services	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Housing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Solid Waste Disposal	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Local Business Hours	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Hi-speed Internet	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**IV. Your Perceptions about Local Tourism and Recreational Amenities**

21. Please examine the following elements of **tourism in the area surrounding the Luck Golf Course** and indicate both the LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE and the LEVEL OF SATISFACTION you associate with each of the services provided.

	<u>Level of Importance you place on:</u>					<u>Level of Satisfaction you experienced with:</u>				
	Very Important	Neutral	Very Unimportant	Very Satisfied	Neutral	Very Unsatisfied				
Fast-Food Restaurants	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Sit-Down Restaurants	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Take-Out Restaurants	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Hardware Stores	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Hotels/Motels/B&Bs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Amusements	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Handicrafts & souvenirs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Local Arts and Theatre	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Golf Courses	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Historical sites	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
WiFi Locations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Bicycle Shops/Repair	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Sporting Goods Stores	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Interpretive displays	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Gambling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Festivals and Events	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**V. Your Attitudes About Evaluating Fiscal Tradeoffs**

Units of government are often forced to make trade-offs in order to improve or maintain the quality of life. The following scenarios ask you to allocate resources based on what you believe is important.

22. I don't have a problem with the concept of increasing green fees to pay for maintenance and improvements of the Luck Golf Course.

strongly agree      agree                      neutral                      disagree                      strongly disagree  
 I-----I-----I-----I-----I

23. Suppose you were a local official and revenues increased by \$100 this year. How would you distribute this additional \$100 given the following choices? For example, would you distribute \$16.66 in each category, \$100 in one, or some other pattern?

	Amount
a. Reduce taxes	\$ _____
b. Increase spending for services (i.e., fire/police)	\$ _____
c. Increase spending for education	\$ _____
d. Increase spending for roads	\$ _____
e. Increase spending for social services	\$ _____
f. Increase spending for maintenance of the Luck Golf Course	\$ _____

TOTAL \$ 100.00

24. Suppose that local revenues decreased by \$100 this year. If forced to balance the budget, how would you make up for the lost revenue?

- |  | amount   |
|--|----------|
| a. Increase taxes  | \$ _____ |
| b. Decrease spending for services (i.e., fire/police)        | \$ _____ |
| c. Decrease spending for education                           | \$ _____ |
| d. Decrease spending for roads                               | \$ _____ |
| e. Decrease spending for social services                     | \$ _____ |
| f. Decrease spending for maintenance of the Luck Golf Course | \$ _____ |

TOTAL \$ 100.00

## VI. Demographic Information

25. If you have children, how many do you have living at home? \_\_\_\_\_ children
26. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_ male  
\_\_\_\_\_ female
27. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ years old
28. How many years of school did you complete? \_\_\_\_\_ years of school
29. Is your place of employment located in Polk County?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ no  
\_\_\_\_\_ I'm retired  
\_\_\_\_\_ I'm unemployed
30. If you are employed, what is your occupation?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Homemaker  
\_\_\_\_\_ Service worker  
\_\_\_\_\_ Laborer  
\_\_\_\_\_ Transport equipment operative  
\_\_\_\_\_ Craftsman  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clerical worker  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sales worker  
\_\_\_\_\_ Manager/administrator  
\_\_\_\_\_ Professional, technical worker  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
31. Please characterize yourself as:  
\_\_\_\_\_ a year-round resident of Luck  
\_\_\_\_\_ a year-round resident of a community within Polk or Burnett County  
\_\_\_\_\_ a seasonal resident of Polk or Burnett County  
\_\_\_\_\_ a visitor to Luck
32. What is your current annual household income?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less than \$15,000  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$15,000 - \$29,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$30,000 - \$49,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000 - \$69,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$70,000 - \$99,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$100,000 - \$149,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$150,000 - \$199,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$200,000 - \$249,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ Greater than \$250,000

## **Thank You For Your Assistance!**

**Questions, comments, and requests for results can be addressed by/to:**

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