



**Study of Superior Visitor Center Guest Registry Logs
Completed for Copper Corridor Economic Development Coalition and
Arizona Office of Tourism
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Data collected from January 2013 to December 2015**

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Overview of Study and Methods

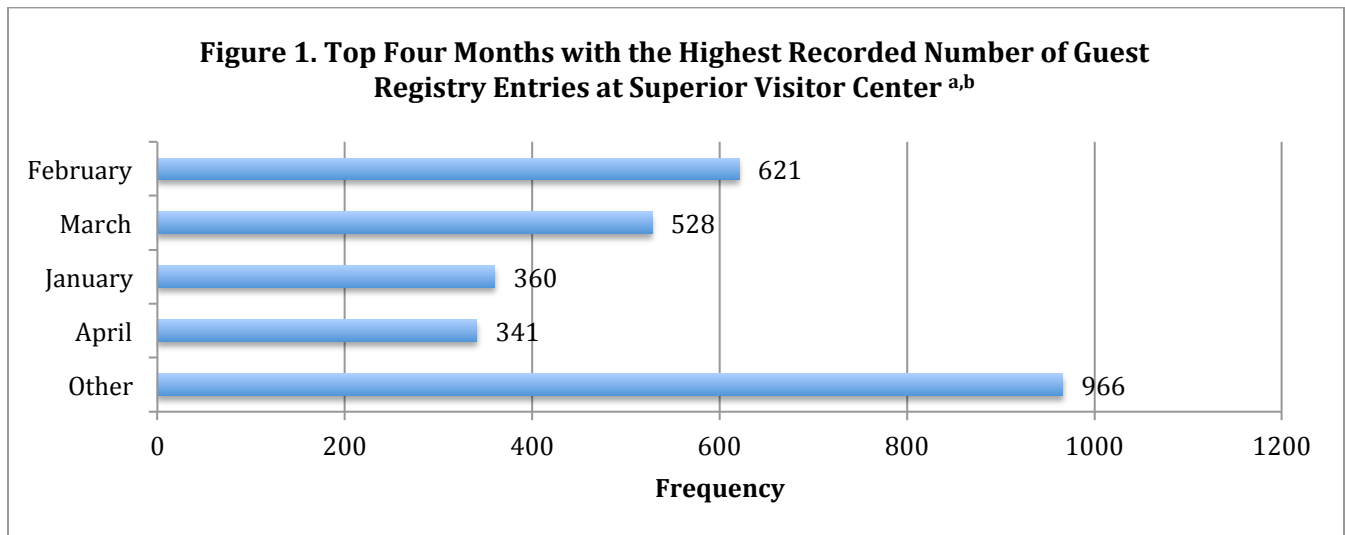
This study aimed to better understand visitors to the Copper Corridor, which is an area of central Arizona that is made up of 11 mining and former mining communities. This was accomplished by reviewing the guest registry logs from the three visitor centers in the Copper Corridor. Visitor centers offer a place to welcome guests to a destination, and provide information to assist guests in making the most of their trips. As an initiative, the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) designed guest registry logs to be displayed in visitor centers throughout Arizona to engage visitors in sharing information about themselves and their trip.

The guest registry logs include fields for guests to enter their name, where they are from, whether they are a visitor or local, if travel is for business or leisure, how many nights spent in the community and in Arizona, type of accommodations used, and size of traveling party. The desire is for every travel party entering a visitor center to sign-in to the guest registry log and to fill out each field on the log. However, guests often did not fill out every field, which leaves challenges for comparison across fields. Footnotes in the tables below denote the number of missing responses for each variable. There are limitations to using registry logs to assess the number of visitors. First, not everyone will sign a registry. Second, the number of people reported in a travel party might not be correct if several vehicles are used.

The Copper Corridor region has three visitor centers. Two in Superior, AZ and one in Oracle, AZ; both are gateway communities to the Copper Corridor. Each of the visitor centers report the number of guest log entries to the Arizona Office of Tourism on a monthly basis. This study, however, is the first to review and analyze the guest information provided on the logs. For this study, the guest registry logs from all three visitor centers of the Copper Corridor area were obtained. Reported here is a profile of visitors to the Superior Visitor Center based on the guest registry logs from January 2013 to December 2015. A total of 2,838 entries were made to the guest registry log at Superior Visitor Center between January 2013 and December 2015. In 2013 there were 1,047 entries, in 2014 there were 884 entries, and in 2015 there were 907 entries.

Visitor Profile

Over the three-year period, the winter months showed the highest visitation to the Superior Visitor Center, with February having the highest visitation (621 visitors) (Figure 1). Thirty-one percent of guests were from Arizona, followed by Minnesota with seven percent of visitors (Table 1). Most guests were domestic visitors (83%), with the highest percent (14%) of international visitors coming from Canada (Table 2). Eighty-eight percent of respondents identified themselves as visitors, while 12% identified themselves as locals (Table 3). Men and couples each accounted for 37% of travel parties (Table 4). Ninety-four percent traveled for leisure (Table 5). Friends/relatives were the most common form of accommodation for visitors who stayed overnight in the area (28%) (Figure 2). The average number of nights stayed in Arizona, represented by the median, was eight, with the number of nights ranging from zero to 365. The average number of nights stayed in the Copper Corridor, represented by the median, was zero, with the number of nights ranging from zero to 180. Travel parties consisted mostly of adults, with number of adults ranging from one to 40 (Table 6).



^a The values of the remaining 8 months of the calendar year are recorded as “Other.”

^b There were 22 missing responses.

Table 1: Origin of Visitor, Reported by Top Four States/Provinces, Superior Visitor Center

State/Province of Origin	Frequency	Percent (%)
Arizona	806	31%
Minnesota	169	7
California	103	4
Alberta, Canada	99	4
Other ^a	1,402	54
Total^b	2,579	100%

^a “Other” accounts for 64 states from which 94 visitors or less originated. The term “states” included the United States, Canadian provinces, and cities of other countries.

^b There were 259 missing responses.

Table 2: Origin of Visitor, Reported by Top Three Countries, Superior Visitor Center

Country of Origin	Frequency	Percent (%)
USA	2,255	83%
Canada	370	14
Germany	14	1
Other	65	2
Total^a	2,704	100

^a There were 134 missing responses. 12 visitors or less originating from 23 countries are recorded as “Other.”

Table 3: Visitors and Locals, Superior Visitor Center

Residency	Frequency	Percent (%)
Visitor	1,394	88%
Local	195	12
Total^a	1,589	100%

^a There were 1,249 missing responses to this question from the guest registry.

Table 4: Composition of Party, Superior Visitor Center

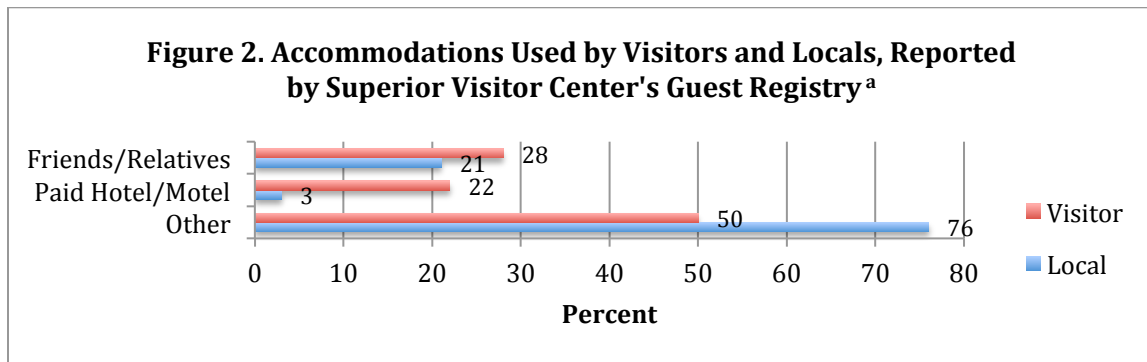
Composition Type	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	1,039	37%
Female	646	23
Couple	1,034	37
Family	87	3
Total^a	2,806	100%

^a There were 32 missing responses. Couple represents a traveling party of two people. Family represents a traveling party of three or more people.

Table 5: Purpose of Visit to the Copper Corridor Region, Reported by Superior Visitor Center’s Guest Registry

Purpose of Visit	Frequency	Percent (%)
Leisure	1,841	94%
Business	83	4
Both	34	2
Total^a	1,958	100%

^a There were 880 missing responses.



^a There were 1,602 missing responses. There is potential likelihood of those filling out “Other” came to the Copper Corridor on a day trip, with no overnight stay involved. Other also includes RV and tent camping as offered by the visitor.

Table 6: Averages of Nights Stayed and Number in Traveling Party for those Visiting Superior Visitor Center^a

	Mean	Median	Mode	Range (Low - High)
Nights stayed in Arizona	25.6	8	7	0 - 365
Nights stayed in Copper Corridor Communities	2.9	0	0	0 - 180
Number of Persons in Traveling Party	2.2	2	2	1 - 40
Number of Adults in Traveling Party	2.2	2	2	1 - 40
Number of Children in Traveling Party ^b	0.7	0	0	0 - 8

^a This table excluded those who indicated they were locals.

^b Among the traveling parties, 31% had children in them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study is the first to analyze Arizona Office of Tourism guest registry logs and offers valuable insight into the visitors of the Copper Corridor. Understanding the visitors to the Copper Corridor will assist in strategizing future marketing efforts and developing tourism in the region.

The difference between number of nights stayed in Arizona and number of nights stayed in the Copper Corridor shows opportunity for attracting more overnight stays and multi-day visitors to the Copper Corridor. Visitor centers should highlight accommodation options of the area and, as resources allow, assist guests in making accommodation reservations. Brochures or displays with itinerary suggestions can also be valuable in encouraging longer visits to the region. As marketing develops in the Copper Corridor, visitor centers could be used as a means of advertising such as social media campaigns, the use of a regional hashtag, encouraging guests to write TripAdvisor reviews, and other similar actions.

Visitor centers are important points of contact to inform visitors of all there is to see and do in an area. Prominent signage and convenient access to visitor centers are key points to attracting travelers to pull off the road and engage at a visitor center. Superior Visitor Center is housed in a repurposed train caboose on the westside of downtown on Highway 60. This is excellent for showcasing the unique identity and history of Superior and the Copper Corridor region. An ore cart outside the visitor center is also an inviting piece for visitors. Not only do these things help to showcase the identity of the Copper Corridor and create a sense of place, but with social media and the popularity of sharing photos, these sites also provide nice spots for photographs.

The uniqueness of an area and local flavor are the most valuable assets of any destination. Building on the unique structure of the visitor center, training of volunteers and staff should seek to make them aware of, and enthusiastic about, the local flavor. Brochures and information should be provided about Superior, as well as the Copper Corridor, as the visitor centers can be valuable in bridging the communities of the region. Information on things to do at various times of day will aid in encouraging longer stays in the area. For example, nightlife is currently undeveloped in the area; however, stargazing might be an intriguing activity to suggest for the evening hours. Conducting a familiarization (FAM) tour for new volunteers and staff can be valuable for their knowledge of the area and thus promotion of all of the businesses of the Copper Corridor. This can also encourage longer stays and return visits to the region.