

# THE BUSINESS TIMES

## **Rafting a revenue stream: Colorado industry generated more than \$150 million in 2010**

Posted by [Staff Writer](#) on Feb 15 2011.

Commercial rafting firms in Colorado reported an increase in business in 2010 that pushed the estimated stream of revenue from the industry to more than \$150 million.

With an anticipated increase in consumer spending as well as deep snowpacks that serve as the source of Colorado river flows, the outlook for the 2011 rafting season appears promising.

According to an annual report from the [Colorado River Outfitters Association](#) (CROA), commercial rafting companies reported a total of 507,392 user days during the 2010 season. That's an increase of 16,500 user days, or 3.4 percent, from 2009. The CROA defines a user day as a paying guest on a river for any part of a day.

The trade association of 50 rafting outfitters from across Colorado issued the report during its recent convention in Grand Junction.

Total visitor days for commercial rafting in Colorado topped 500,000 for four straight years between 2005 to 2008 before dipping in 2009, mostly as a result of the recession.

Johnny Cantamessa of Highside Adventure Tours in Dillon, the newly elected chairman of the CROA, said he welcomed the rebound.

"When times and budgets are tight, the thrill-per-dollar ratio becomes that much more important, as evidenced by our industry's strong 2010," Cantamessa said.

The economic effects of commercial river rafting in Colorado during 2010 was estimated at \$150.3 million. That figure is up \$7 million, or 4.9 percent, from the estimate for 2009 and was second only 2007 since the CROA began tracking the statistics in 1988.

The estimates take into account user days; cash outlays for rafting, food, lodging and other expenses; inflation and an economic multiplier of 2.56.

For 2010, the Arkansas and Colorado rivers saw the largest increases in user days and economic effects.

Commercial rafting companies reported 211,150 user days on the Arkansas, nearly 42 percent of the overall total for Colorado. Rafting on the Arkansas was up 5,274 user days, or 2.5 percent, in 2010.

Three stretches of the Colorado near Glenwood Springs and west of Grand Junction accounted for a total of 71,961 user days in 2010, an increase of almost 15 percent from 2009.

The economic effects of commercial rafting on the Arkansas River was estimated at \$62.5 million. The economic effects of commercial rafting on the stretches of the Colorado River totalled more than \$21.3 million.

User days and the economic effects of commercial rafting in Colorado could climb even higher in 2011, according to the executive summary of the annual report: "The outlook for 2011 is bright as consumer spending increases and excellent snowpack across the state portends adequate flows in the rivers when the snowmelt begins this spring."