

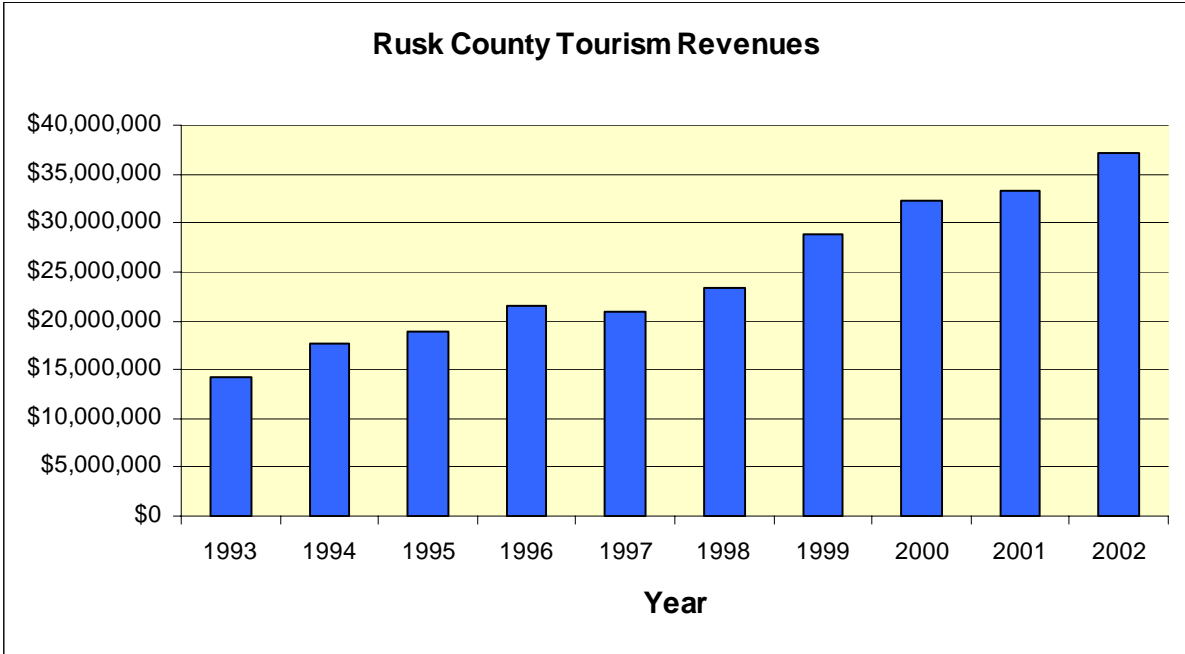
## 4 TOURISM

In the past, Rusk County has not seen itself as a tourist destination. Although the Flambeau River is one of the best “whitewater” rivers in the Midwest, the 60,000 acres of wooded Blue Hills with the Christie Mountain Ski area is breathtaking, and the County has world-class trout and game fishing, Rusk County had many tourists passing through to other destinations with comparable attractions.

### 4.1 TOURISM REVENUE

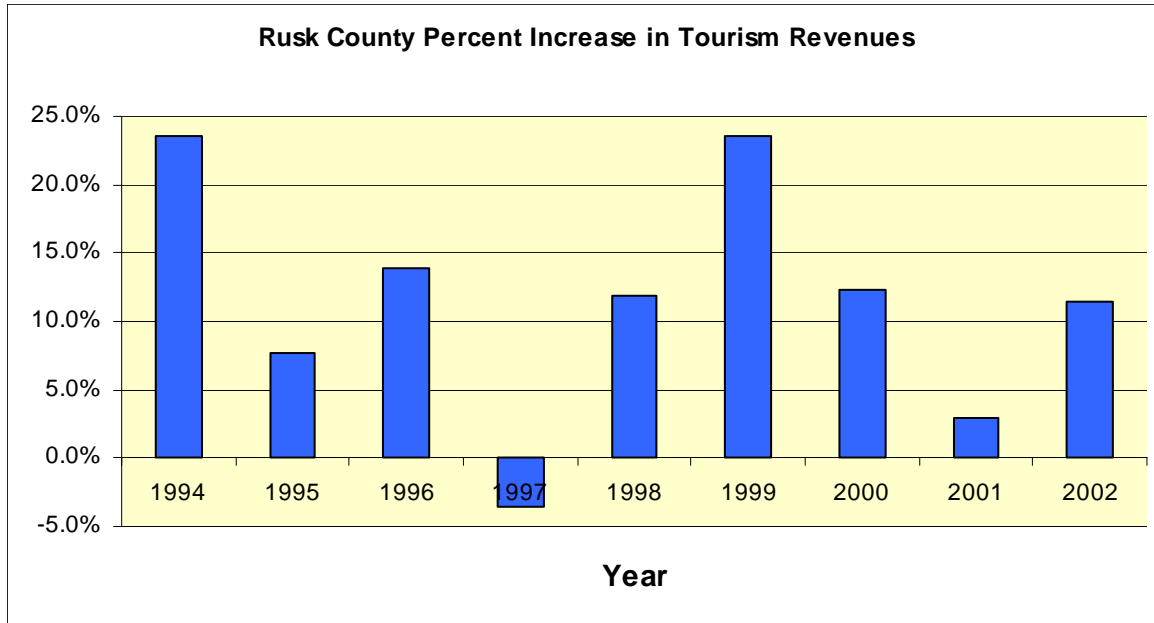
In 1993, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism started tracking tourism expenditures in the State and individual counties. When tourism expenditure tracking was first initiated in 1993, travelers spent \$14 million in Rusk County. In the year 2002, travelers spent \$37 million, representing an increase of 160 percent. By comparison, the State experienced an increase of 118 percent during that same timeframe. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict tourism expenditures for Rusk County from 1993 to 2002.

Figure 4.1



Source: Wisconsin Department of Tourism

Figure 4.2



Source: Wisconsin Department of Tourism

Table 4.1 indicates the number of establishments and the amount of sales for eating and drinking places; hotels, motels, and other accommodations; and arts, entertainment, and recreational services for Rusk County and the State of Wisconsin for 1992 and 1997.

Table 4.1 Establishments and Sales for Tourism Related Industries					
Eating & Drinking Places					
	Establishments		Sales (\$1,000)		
	1992	1997	1992	1997	% Change in Sales
<b>Rusk County</b>	42	34	6275	6763	7.78%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	10,985	11,612	3,668,310	D	
Hotels, Motels, & Other Accommodations					
	Establishments		Sales (\$1,000)		
	1992	1997	1992	1997	% Change in Sales
<b>Rusk County</b>	6	8	578	D	
<b>Wisconsin</b>	1,245	1,484	744,049	D	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services, inc. Motion Pictures					
	Establishments		Sales (\$1,000)		
	1992	1997	1992	1997	% Change in Sales
<b>Rusk County</b>	8	5	683	561	-17.86%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	2,555	2,885	1,181,765	1,866,309	57.93%

Source: U.S. Economic Census, 1992 & 1997 D = Withheld to avoid disclosure

*Note: Comparisons are difficult between the 1992 and 1997 Economic Census because of the reporting changeover from SIC based data to NAICS based data. State data has been compared and reported both ways, but county data has not.*

While the Flambeau Mine was in operation, groups from all over the state, neighboring states, and the world came to tour the mine site and the mine's visitor's center. While in Rusk County, these visitors stopped at eating places and some may have stayed at local hotels and motels. In that way, the mine brought revenues to the local businesses that provided those services. As shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, the decrease in tourism revenues in 1997 may have been a result of the closing down of mine operations in the middle of the year.

In addition to promoting tourism by the sheer physical presence of the mine, Flambeau Mining contributed monetarily to the Rusk County Economic Development organization for use in promoting tourism through the "Discover Rusk County" campaign. Other community charitable contributions are discussed in Section 7.

During the past few years and in cooperation with other organizations, much stronger efforts are being made by Rusk County Development to encourage and promote tourism in the County. To replace the old Rusk County Visitor's Center, which was too small and not a handicap accessible facility, a new building was constructed in 1998. The new Visitor's Center and Railroad Museum is a replica of a vintage railroad depot. Part of its funding was from mining first dollar and supplemental payments to Rusk County.