

# Total eclipse left lasting memories,

BY JASON EVANS  
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STATE — The full view of the highly anticipated total solar eclipse only lasted a few minutes, but in addition to creating lifelong memories, it left a lasting impact on the South Carolina economy.

The Aug. 21 eclipse was the largest single tourist event on record in South Carolina, according to research released in September by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

Roughly 1.6 million people traveled to or within South Carolina to view the eclipse. Those travelers' hotel bookings and other expenditures had an estimated economic impact of \$269 million across the state. About 800,000 visitors were from out of state — primarily from North Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Both Oconee and Pickens County were in the path of totality for the first eclipse across the entire contiguous United States since 1918. It was the first total eclipse since

1979 that was visible from anywhere in the mainland United States.

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Oconee County parks began booking reservations for the eclipse 11 months before the event and were booked solid three

months before the event, officials told the Journal.

The event brought an estimated 50,000 people to the Clemson University campus for the Eclipse Over Clemson event, held behind the Cooper Library and at the Watt Family Innovation Center. The Clemson University

event has been chronicled in a new book. In addition to more than 100 full-color pictures of the eclipse and the crowd, "Eclipse Over Clemson: The day Tiger-town will never forget" features a poem written for the book by Southern author Ron Rash and chapters from scientists, naturalists, psychologists, novelists and media relations experts.

Duke Energy officials began planning for an eclipse event at the World of Energy a year in advance. Eclipse watchers began arriving at 5 a.m. the day of the eclipse, and by totality, more than 1,200 visitors were at the World of Energy, with some out-of-state visitors driving five hours to make sure they got there on time.

Seneca High School students gathered in the school's stadium to view the eclipse.

Seneca High School

chorus teacher Diane McFarlane said she remembered as a child putting a pinhole in small shoeboxes to safely view a partial eclipse.

"This is exciting because, for me, a total eclipse is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," McFarlane said. "I'll be 87 the next time I get to experience it, so being able to share it with your students is unique and something that has great memories. You'll be able to remember who you're with."

There was one new arrival that day at Oconee Memorial Hospital.

Lexi Grace Thomas was the only baby born at Oconee Memorial Hospital during the day of the eclipse. Greenville Health System hospitals gave onesies to babies born Aug. 21 to commemorate the day.

jevans@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6680  
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## economic impact



More than a million people traveled to or within South Carolina to watch the Aug. 21 total solar eclipse, according to state tourism officials.

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