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(S.D.)- Annual SD Lakota Invitational Draws People, Money

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 12/24/2012 10:03 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) - A four-day Lakota Nation Invitational in Rapid City has given the city a financial boost of about \$5 million.

Local retailers, restaurants and hotels benefited from the annual event that wrapped up Saturday.

The event drew larger crowds spending more money as tens of thousands of Native American students, parents and sports fans flooded the city. The event is part basketball tournament, part academic challenge and part family reunion for tribal members.

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center General Manager Brian Baliske says he expects final figures to show that about 2,000 more tickets were sold for the basketball games this year compared to last.

He also says about 41,000 people came through the Civic Center doors, and that concessions sales increased by 11 percent.