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USFSP College of Business study details economic impact of Dolphin Tale

Posted August 16, 2012 at 10:09 am by [Tom Scherberger](#)

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— Winter the dolphin at Clearwater Marine Aquarium

CLEARWATER (Aug. 15, 2012) – A new study by the USF St. Petersburg College of Business has found that the local economic impact of the movie *Dolphin Tale* will total more than a half-billion dollars next year and will triple by 2016. The impact on the local economy totals \$5 billion over five years, the study found.

The impact of the popular family film was spread across all sectors of the local

economy, from hotels to taxis, but was felt most directly at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, where the real-life story is set.

The film had a two-fold impact on the local economy, the study found, generating jobs in 2010 during 55 days of production and continuing after it became one of the most popular films in the country. The impact will continue to grow through 2016.

“Our research shows that when considering tourists to the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area, the *Dolphin Tale* movie is the driver of approximately 72.7% of visitors to CMA,” the study says. “The model forecasts approximately 800,000 visitors in 2013, growing to 2.3 million in 2016. These visitors will provide a total economic impact to the local economy of approximately \$580 million in 2013, which increases to \$1.7 billion in 2016.”

The study was done by USFSP Economics Professor Maria Luisa Corton and USFSP College of Business Dean Maling Ebrahimpour. MBA students Alex Zirbel and Michael Carter assisted in the research.

The findings were released Thursday at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium by CEO David Yates, who praised the authors for the quality of their work.

“The study is an example of the kind of community engagement and collaboration we believe in at USF St. Petersburg,” said Ebrahimpour. “We thank the Clearwater Marine Aquarium for its cooperation in this worthy project, which adds to the field of study of film-induced tourism.”

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