



Wall-to-wall coverage puts us all back in shop window

RETAIL & TOURISM

Anne-Marie Walsh

SHOPOWNERS have suffered short-term pain for long-term gains of over €150m. Sales slumped by up to 50pc in Dublin city centre shops as the streets emptied and some outlets closed, while gardai mounted a major security operation for the queen's arrival.

But they picked up later after retailers decided to open late and crowds surged into the city centre yesterday ahead of the Europa League final.

The biggest boost for the retail and tourism trade, though, is predicted in the months to come due to free back-to-back publicity, courtesy of the world media. Some 9,000 articles have already been published across the globe about the queen's trip, of which 5,000 appeared in 95 countries within 24 hours of her arrival here.

Dublin Chamber of Commerce estimates the combined visit of the queen and President Barack Obama could be worth as much as €150m in advertising terms for the country.

The cost of a single page ad in one of the big UK newspapers is

worth over €113,000 alone, and the visit has enjoyed continuous coverage on Sky News.

"This is one of the biggest international media stories of the year to date involving Ireland and, significantly, it is an overwhelmingly positive one," said Stephen O'Leary, managing director of O'Leary Analytics, which is carrying out research on media coverage of the visit.

Failte Ireland is also offering journalists covering Mr Obama's visit next week itineraries for their "down time".

"We are extremely lucky to have the eyes of the world's media upon us over the next few days and this presents us with a priceless opportunity to present a positive, warm and welcoming image of Ireland," said Failte Ireland CEO Shaun Quinn.

He said the images beamed around the world would boost the tourism industry, which employs 190,000 people.

Meanwhile, **Richard Guiney** of the Dublin City **Business Improvement District** said although the official footfall figures were expected to show an initial drop when released later this week, retailers expected long-term benefits.