

WHERE THE FUN RUNS DEEP



RiVERFEST

2009

**SUMMARY OF FESTIVAL
VISITOR SURVEY RESULTS AND
ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY**



INSTITUTE *for*
ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Riverfest 2009

Summary of Festival Visitor Survey Results and Economic Impact Study

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INTRODUCTION

This report, prepared by the Institute for Economic Advancement (IEA) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), summarizes information collected via face-to-face interviews with Riverfest visitors during the Memorial Day weekend, May 22 through May 24, 2009. This summary report was based upon a sample of 599 randomly selected adults at systematic time intervals during the festival. Furthermore, it gives a summary of the findings of the economic impact study of the 2009 Riverfest. This report provides a question-by-question tabulation of the survey results. Additionally, verbatim comments from survey respondents are provided in this summary. Due to computerized rounding it is possible that all percentages will not equal 100 percent.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the development of this research study was jointly agreed upon by the survey research team of IEA and Riverfest officials. Thus, questionnaire construction was a cooperative effort between IEA and Riverfest officials. The questionnaire was designed to obtain attendees' overall perceptions of the festival (this includes a customer satisfaction focus), estimated expenditures during the festival (for economic impact analysis purposes), attendee demographics, and visitor comments.

The survey population included persons 18 years and older who attended at least one day of the Riverfest activities. According to estimates reported in a local newspaper, approximately 200,000 people attended the three-day festival.¹ The survey data were collected utilizing a modified mall intercept methodology. This method is directed to mobile populations outside the home in face-to-face interviewing situations. Additionally, time and location cluster sampling techniques were utilized based upon projected traffic flow patterns.

IEA research staff supervised volunteers who were recruited by Riverfest officials to assist with the data collection process. All volunteers were trained prior to the actual data collection period and were under professional supervision at all times. Three interviewing stations were set up by Riverfest officials at Little Rock Main Entrance, Clinton Library Gate, and North Little Rock Main Entrance. Interview totals for the gate locations were as follows:

Little Rock Gate	200 completed interviews
Clinton Library Gate . .	202 completed interviews
North Little Rock Gate .	197 completed interviews

SURVEY RESULTS

General Findings

➤ *All Visitors*

Of all the survey respondents, sixty-three percent (63.4%) indicated that they had attended a previous years' festival. The overwhelming majority of respondents (92.5%) reported that they were Arkansas residents. Those surveyed represented 37 Arkansas counties and 14 states. The most frequently reported means of hearing about Riverfest was through friends, family, or acquaintances (29.4%), followed by the radio (21.2%), and television (20.0%). "Other" responses included work and "from living here." Most respondents (40.7%) indicated that they planned to attend two days of Riverfest, followed closely by three days (40.4%). Only eighteen percent (18.2%) of all respondents expected to attend just one day of the festival. The total number of days visitors planned to attend the festival was 1,359. With a sample of 599 respondents, the average number of days accounts for 2.27. Based on the total number of reported admissions of 82,040, the total number of visits by people attending Riverfest 2009 was 186,131.

¹ Arkansas Democrat Gazette, May 26, 2009.

Out-of-County Visitors

Visitors residing outside Pulaski County were asked to give the main reason for their coming to Little Rock. Of these 283 persons, seventy-two percent (72.4%) indicated that attending Riverfest was the number one reason for coming to the city. This response was followed by visiting friends or family (9.2%), and various “Other” responses (6.0%) which included work and a visit to the Clinton Library. Out-of-county visitors were also asked what method of transportation they used to arrive in the city. An overwhelming majority (87.6%) reported arriving by a private car, with another six percent (5.67%) arriving by bus. “Other” transportation methods included RV, bicycles, and walking. The most frequently cited response when asked how many days visitors would be staying in Little Rock was two days (43.0%) followed by three days (27.3%).

Visitor Perceptions

Quality of Riverfest	Frequency	Percent	
The majority of respondents (91.9%) indicated the overall quality of Riverfest was Excellent or Good.	Excellent	283	47.2
	Good	268	44.7
	Fair	39	6.5
	Poor	5	0.8
	No Answer	4	0.7
Total	599	100.0	

Music Entertainment	Frequency	Percent	
The majority of respondents (83.3%) indicated the music entertainment was Excellent or Good.	Excellent	280	46.7
	Good	219	36.6
	Fair	53	8.8
	Poor	16	2.7
	No Answer	31	5.2
Total	599	100.0	

Visual Art	Frequency	Percent	
The most frequently reported rating for visual art was Good (46.7%).	Excellent	170	28.4
	Good	280	46.7
	Fair	59	9.8
	Poor	9	1.5
	No Answer	81	13.5
Total	559	100.0	

Children's Area & Entertainment	Frequency	Percent	
The children's area was highly rated by surveyed visitors with an Excellent rating of 33.9% and 1.5% indicating a Poor rating.	Excellent	203	33.9
	Good	216	36.1
	Fair	39	6.5
	Poor	9	1.5
	No Answer	132	22.0
Total	599	100.0	

Food	Frequency	Percent	
Food is a consistent highly rated amenity at Riverfest with 84.7% of respondents rating it as Excellent or Good.	Excellent	261	43.6
	Good	246	41.1
	Fair	27	4.5
	Poor	12	2.0
	No Answer	53	8.8
Total	599	100.0	

Visitor Expenditures

➤ *Transportation*

When out-of-county visitors were asked to estimate the dollar amount spent on transportation getting to Little Rock, their responses ranged from \$1.39 to \$500.00. The average amount spent on transportation (from a total of 259 responses) was \$42.49 with a total dollar amount of \$11,005.39.

➤ *Lodging*

Visitors residing outside Pulaski County were asked if they were spending the night in Little Rock. Of the two hundred seventy-three responding, forty-two percent (41.8%) indicated that they would be staying overnight. Follow-up questions were posed to gather more detail on the lodging situation of those respondents staying overnight in the city (n=114). The majority (53.9%) indicated they would be staying at a hotel/motel followed by staying with family/friends (34.2%) and staying at a camping area (8.6%). Respondents reported estimated dollars expended on hotels/motels ranging from a low of \$9.00 to a high of \$900.00. The average expenditure response (from a total of 63 responses) was \$161.32 with a total dollar amount of \$10,163.

➤ *Food & Beverage*

All visitors were asked to estimate the dollar amount they expected to spend on food and beverages during the festival. A total of 559 responses were gathered revealing a range of \$5.00 to \$1,600.00 with an average expenditure of \$97.53 and a total dollar amount of \$54,519.50. Considering total food and beverage purchases during the festival weekend, visitors were asked to provide a more detailed breakdown by restaurants, grocery stores, and at the festival. This breakdown is summarized in the following sections.

➤ *Restaurants*

Riverfest visitors were asked to estimate the dollar amount they expected to pay for eating at local restaurants. A total of 168 responses were obtained, and they ranged from \$5.00 to \$600.00 with an average

expenditure of \$74.71 and a total dollar amount of \$12,551.00 being reported.

➤ *Grocery Stores*

The estimated dollar amount expected to be spent at grocery stores ranged from \$5.00 to \$400.00. The average dollar amount was \$60.12 (for 65 responses) and the total dollar amount was \$3,908.00.

➤ *Festival*

The average expected expenditures on Riverfest ranged from \$5.00 to \$800.00. A total of 545 responses were collected with an average amount of \$70.61 and a total dollar amount of \$38,484.50.

➤ *Fuel Costs*

Respondents were asked to estimate their fuel expenditures while they are in Little Rock for Riverfest. The responses ranged from \$0.30 to \$400.00 with an average of \$28.88 (from 442 total responses) and a total dollar amount of \$12,763.09.

➤ *Retail Shopping*

Of all the surveyed visitors, 126 responded with an estimated expenditure on retail shopping goods. These estimates ranged from \$2.00 to \$450.00 with an average of \$60.31 and the total reported dollar amount equaling \$7,599.00.

➤ *Festival Merchandise*

The estimated dollar amount expected to be spent on festival merchandise ranged from \$2.00 to \$425.00 with 198 total responses. The average expenditure was reported to be \$35.84 and the total dollar amount reported was \$7,097.00.

➤ *Other Expenditures*

Twenty-eight surveyed visitors reported “Other” expenditures ranging in price from \$9.00 to \$100.00. The average expenditure was \$36.45 and the total dollar amount reported was \$1,020.50. “Other” expenditures reported included ferris wheel, Clinton Library, button, and tattoo.

Visitor Demographics

Gender	Face-to-Face Interview		Online Survey		Combined	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	271	45.2	86	28.3	357	39.5
Female	328	54.8	218	71.7	546	60.5
Total	599	100.0	304	100.0	903	100.0

Age	Face-to-Face Interview		Online Survey		Combined	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
18 to 24	110	18.4	68	22.4	178	19.7
25 to 44	320	53.4	166	54.6	486	53.8
45 to 64	156	26.0	69	22.7	225	24.9
65 or older	13	2.2	1	0.3	14	1.6
Total	599	100.0	304	100.0	903	100.0

Race/Ethnic	Face-to-Face Interview		Online Survey		Combined	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
White/Caucasian	359	59.9	265	87.2	624	69.1
Black/African-American	161	26.9	23	7.6	184	20.4
Hispanic/Latin American	21	3.5	4	1.3	25	2.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	16	2.7	6	2.0	22	2.4
Indian/Native American	10	1.7	3	1.0	13	1.4
Eskimo/Aleutian	3	0.5	0	0.0	3	0.3
Other	20	3.3	3	1.0	23	2.5
No Answer	9	1.5	0	0.0	9	1.0
Total	599	100.0	304	100.0	903	100.0

Education	Face-to-Face Interview		Online Survey		Combined	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Less than 12th	27	4.5	12	3.9	39	4.3
High School Graduate	141	23.5	57	18.8	198	21.9
Some College/VoTech	160	26.7	103	33.9	263	29.1
Associates Degree	56	9.4	40	13.2	96	10.6
Bachelor Degree	128	21.4	61	20.1	189	20.9
Masters Degree	75	12.5	27	8.9	102	11.3
Doctorate Degree	12	2.0	4	1.3	16	1.8
Total	599	100.0	304	100.0	903	100.0

Total Household Income	Face-to-Face Interview		Online Survey		Combined	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
\$25,000 or less	130	21.7	50	16.4	180	19.9
\$25,001 to \$50,000	192	32.1	110	36.2	302	33.4
\$50,001 to \$75,000	127	21.2	67	22.0	194	21.5
\$75,001 to \$100,000	61	10.2	41	13.5	102	11.3
Greater than \$100,000	75	12.5	36	11.8	111	12.3
No Answer	14	2.3	0	0.0	14	1.6
Total	599	100.0	304	100.0	903	100.0

Visitor Companions

An overwhelming majority (87.3%) of the Riverfest visitors surveyed indicated that they arrived with others. Of the visitors arriving with others (n=523), approximately thirty percent (29.7%) reported one companion and sixteen percent (16.2%) was reported for both two and three companions. The visitors who were not attending alone indicated that seventy-four percent (74.0%) had immediate family members present with them. One hundred forty-five respondents indicated a family member under the age of 10 years.

Visitor Comments

All respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments on their opinions and perceptions of how Riverfest could be improved. Comments were collected from the respondents.

The following are comments arranged by topic answering the question “Do you have any comments about how we could improve this festival or future Riverfest festivals?”

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

The economic impact of the festival is a function of visitor population and direct visitor spending, combined with multipliers reflecting the extent of recirculation of visitors' dollars spent in the local economy. Since only expenditures from sources outside of Pulaski County have an economic impact on its economy, the focus was on out-of-town visitor expenditures. The study of the economic impact of Riverfest 2009 produced the following findings:

- The total number of admissions at Riverfest 2009 was 82,040.
- The total out-of-town visitors' expenditures are \$1,664,695. The portion of out-of-town visitor spending that remains in the local economy (direct impact) accounts for \$1,080,681.

Thus, of the total out-of-town visitor spending, 65% were estimated to be captured by local businesses.

- Economic impacts as measured by the value of the economic output created directly and indirectly by out-of-town visitor spending is estimated at \$1.7 million.
- Another measure of the economic impact of the festival is the change in value added, which is projected to be \$0.9 million.
- Labor income and the gain in employment (number of fulltime equivalent jobs annually) are other commonly provided economic impact measures and are estimated to be \$0.6 million and 25.9, respectively.



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