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## Sanders County Yard Sale: 2014

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# **Sanders County Yard Sale 2014**

Sanders County, Montana

Brian Battaglia, Research Assistant & Megan Tanner Schultz, M.S.

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Case Study Report 2014-12

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## Abstract

This study was conducted for the Sanders County Community Development Corporation to provide insight into the characteristics of attendees of the 2014 Sanders County Yard Sale. Paper surveys were completed by 151 attendees of the event. Results show that 83% of respondents were residents of Montana and of those Montana residents, 57% were from Sanders County. Out-of-county respondents spent an average of four nights in Sanders County and more people spent money on yard sale purchases, gasoline, and restaurant/bars while visiting the area than any other spending categories. Yard sale purchases received the highest total dollars spent during the event. Respondents to the survey reported a total spending of \$13,148.00 in the Sanders County area. Results provide event organizers and the SCCDC with useful data for future event planning, making improvements to the event, event marketing/promotion, and understanding the visitor spending associated with the event.

## Executive Summary

The Sanders County Yard Sale attracted many out-of-county (26%) and out-of-state (17%) visitors to the Sanders County area. The attendees of the event make important economic contributions to the Sanders County and Highway 200 area. The Results of the study are worth considering for future planning of the annual Sanders County Yard Sale event.

- 49% of visitors who reside outside of Sanders County spent at least one night away from home. The mean number of nights spent in Sanders County was 4.4.
- More money was spent by respondents in yard sale (\$4,133.00), gasoline (\$3,376.00), and restaurant/bar (\$2,322.00) than other spending categories.
- 41% of respondents reported staying at the home of a friend/relative, followed by 24% in hotel/motels.
- Attendees were mostly travelling as a couple (40%) or with immediate family (26%). The average travel group size was 2.84 people.
- Respondents traveled with a variety of age categories in their group – the highest percentages were 55-64 years old (44%) and 65-74 years old (39%). Event attendees were of an older demographic.
- Attendees heard about the event mostly from word of mouth (65%) or the newspaper (44%).
- Overall, attendees of the event were very satisfied or satisfied with the Sanders County Yard Sale, and 93% of respondents indicated that they would attend the event next year.

## Management Implications

Sanders County Yard Sale event attendees are travelling from out-of-state and out-of-county to attend the Sanders County Yard Sale. This event brings both resident and nonresident visitors to the Sanders County area, and the attendees of the event make a variety of expenditure contributions while visiting.

A large percentage of people attending the Sanders County event were of an older age demographic. Organizers can focus on reaching the younger age demographic categories for future annual yard sale events. This can be accomplished through new advertising, promotion, and marketing strategies that reach and appeal to younger visitors.

Visitors of the Sanders County Yard Sale indicated that the scenic drive along highway 200 provides an added benefit to the event (70%). Organizers can use the scenic beauty of the sale region to promote and attract more visitors to Sanders County.

Most of the sales occurred along the highway 200 travel corridor. Majority of respondents (70%) reported that they used signage along highway 200 to help navigate to the sales. In the open-ended responses section of the survey (Appendix B), respondents suggested the signage be improved. Organizers can help in an effort to improve signage along highway 200 for the next annual event to ensure that people are finding the sale locations.

It is recommended that the organizers review the respondent's comments from Appendix B to gain more insight into people's likes and dislikes of the sale locations, signage, directions, sale items, and other aspects of the event. Changes based on this input could help in bringing back repeat visitors to Sanders County in the future.

## Introduction

The Sanders County Yard Sale event was hosted throughout Sanders County, Montana over two days from June 28<sup>th</sup> through June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014. It was the 8<sup>th</sup> annual county-wide yard sale event and took place in all of the unique communities throughout Sanders County. A majority of the sales took place along scenic highway 200 in Northwest Montana.

This event is organized by the Sanders County Community Development Corporation and all of the sale hosts who participated. The annual yard sale event has many business sponsors that make the event possible. SCCDC is a non-profit organization located in Sanders County, Montana. SCCDC is committed to improving community services and facilities, as well as encouraging economic development, business expansion, and job creation within Sanders County.

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the 2014 Sanders County Yard Sale event with an understanding of the characteristics of visitors of the yard sale, visitor spending in Sanders County, and levels of satisfaction with different aspects of the yard sale event.

## Methods

Surveyors intercepted yard sale visitors 18 years of age or older for on-site completion of a questionnaire during the two day event. Surveys were given to people by random selection in an attempt to represent the event attendee population. People willing to fill out the questionnaire were given a clipboard, pen, and a survey. No documentation of the number of refusals was recorded.

### Limitations

As in all research, there are limitations to the study. Limitations for the Sanders County Yard Sale study include the following:

- Data was collected by Sanders County area volunteers who received a short training from ITRR's survey contact person (Jen Kreiner-SCCDC) on how to intercept people and how to obtain completed surveys.
- ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.
- Only 151 valid surveys were collected, a relatively small sample size.

## Results

Of the 151 valid respondents, 83 percent (125 people) were from Montana and 17 percent (26 people) were from out of state (see Tables 1 and 2). Of all Montana respondents, 57 percent (86 people) were from Sanders County while 26 percent (39 people) were from other Montana counties.

**Table 1: Residence of all Respondents**

Place of Residence	# of total	% of total
Sanders County	86	57%
Other MT County	39	26%
Montana=126		
U.S. State	26	17%
Total all Residences	151	100%

**Table 2: Out-of-State Respondents**

U.S. Residence	# of respondents
Arizona	1
Colorado	1
Florida	1
Hawaii	1
Idaho	8
Louisiana	1
New Mexico	1
North Dakota	1
Oregon	4
Pennsylvania	1
Utah	1
Washington	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

The mean age of respondents was 56 years old. Of those who were from outside Sanders County and responded to the survey, 49 percent (32 people) reported that they spent at least one night away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents (37 percent) spent two nights in Montana. The mean number of nights spent in Sanders County was 4 nights. A full breakdown of nights spent as well as results of all other questions in this survey can be found in Appendix A.

## Expenditures

Spending information was asked of all the yard sale visitors who reside outside of Sanders County, Montana. The survey asked that they report their best estimate of the total amount of money they and their family/travel group (if applicable) spent in the Sanders County area in the following categories: accommodations, restaurant or bar, groceries or snacks, gasoline, transportation, auto rental, retail goods, and entertainment or recreation.

Table 3 presents the expenditure data of only the respondents who reported spending money in the categories. The mean expenditure of those who spent money for each category can be found along with the percentage of people who reported that they spent money in that category. The last column provides the total dollars spent by those respondents in each category. The total reported expenditure for respondents who spent was \$13,148.00.

**Table 3 – Expenditure Data: Expenditures calculated using only respondents who spent**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>Mean expenditures of attendees <u>who reported that they spent money in these categories</u></b>	<b>% of respondents who reported spending money in each category</b>	<b>Total dollars spent in each category <u>by respondents who spent</u></b>
Yard Sale	\$96.10 (n=43)	29%	\$4,133.00
Gasoline	\$91.23 (n=37)	25%	\$3,376.00
Restaurant/Bar	\$64.50 (n=36)	24%	\$2,322.00
Groceries/Snacks	\$51.38 (n=26)	17%	\$1,336.00
Motel/Hotel/B&B	\$111.29 (n=7)	5%	\$779.00
Retail goods	\$98.57 (n=7)	5%	\$690.00
Entertainment/Recreation	\$40.83 (n=6)	4%	\$245.00
Campground	\$65.67 (n=3)	2%	\$197.00
Local transportation	\$35.00 (n=2)	1%	\$70.00
Auto rental	\$0.00 (n=0)	0%	\$0
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13,148.00</b>

## Appendix A- Results

**Q1. Are you a resident of Montana? n=151**

83% Yes      17% No (skip to Q4.)

**Q2. Do you reside in Sanders County? n=125**

69% Yes (skip to Q17. On back)      31% No (skip to Q5.)

**Q3. In what state, province, or foreign country do you reside?**

**See Table 1 and Table 2.**

**Q4. Is this your first time visiting Sanders County? n=65**

11% Yes      89% No

**Q5. Was attending this event your primary reason for being in the area? n=65**

68% Yes      32% No

**Q6. For what other reasons are you visiting the area? (Check all that apply.) n=47**

10% Vacation/recreation/pleasure      5% Just passing through      0% Business/convention/meeting  
 13% Visiting friends/relatives      8% Shopping

**Q7. For this event, how many nights did you spend away from home? n=65, Mean=2.9**

51% 0 (skip to Q.12)    11% 1      5% 3      2% 5      3% 7      0% 9  
    17% 2      3% 4      0% 6      0% 8      9% 10 or more

**Q8. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? The scenic drive along Hwy 200 provides an added benefit to the event. n=32**

6% Strongly disagree    0% Disagree    0% Neutral    22% Agree    72% Strongly agree

**Q9. How many of those nights were in Montana? n=30, Mean=5**

0% 0      37% 2      7% 4      3% 6      0% 8      17% 10 or more  
 17% 1      10% 3      3% 5      7% 7      0% 9

**Q10. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in Sanders County? n=31, Mean=4.4**

3% 0 nights    39% 2 nights    10% 4 nights    0% 6 nights    0% 8 nights    10% 10 or more  
 16% 1 night    10% 3 nights    7% 5 nights    7% 7 nights    0% 9 nights

**Q11. In what type of accommodation(s) did you stay in Sanders County? (Check all that apply.) n=29**

24% Hotel/motel/B&B      10% Private campground      0% Resort/condominium  
 7% Rental cabin/home      41% Home of friend/relative      0% Guest ranch  
 7% Public land camping    10% Second home/cabin/condo    0% Vehicle in parking lot

**Q12. Please enter your best estimate of the TOTAL amount of money in US dollars you (and your family/travel group, if applicable) spent in the Sanders County area in each of the following categories. If you did not spend money in a category, please leave it blank. (see Table 3 for expenditures).**

**ACCOMMODATIONS in Sanders County**

Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast

Campground

**FOOD in Sanders County**

Restaurant/bar

Groceries/snacks

**YARSALE PURCHASES**

**TRANSPORTATION in Sanders County**

Gasoline/diesel

Local transportation

Auto rental

**RETAIL/SERVICES in Sanders County**

Retail goods

Entertainment/recreation

**Q13. What option best describes the group with whom you attended this event? n=62**

8% Self      26% Immediate family      10% Family/friends      0% Business associates  
 40% Couple      7% Extended family      10% Friends      0% Organized group/club

**Q14. Including you, how many people are in your group? n=61**

5% 1      15% 3      5% 5      0% 7      0% 9      0% more than 10  
 56% 2      13% 4      5% 6      0% 8      2% 10

**Q15. Please select all the ages represented in your group: n=61 for each age category**

5% 0-5 yrs.      8% 11-17 yrs.      13% 25-34 yrs.      16% 45-54 yrs.      39% 65-74 yrs.  
 7% 6-10 yrs.      5% 18-24 yrs.      13% 35-44 yrs.      44% 55-64 yrs.      12% 75 and over

**Q16. What best describes your annual household income? (In US dollars) n=50**

10% Less than \$20,000      24% \$60,000 to \$79,999      0% \$150,000 to \$199,999  
 22% \$20,000 to \$39,999      16% \$80,000 to \$99,999      2% \$200,000 and over  
 18% \$40,000 to \$59,999      8% \$100,000 to \$149,999

**Q17. How long before this event did you make plans to attend? n=138**

25% The day of the event      15% 1-4 weeks before the event      30% Over 6 months before the event  
 23% 1-7 days before the event      7% 1-6 months before the event

**Q18. How did you hear about the Sanders County Yard Sale? (Check all that apply.) n=141 per selection**

65% Word of mouth      1% Television      4% E-mail from event planner      9% Event website  
 44% Newspaper      18% Posters      5% Group or club      3% Social media  
 1% Radio      6% Just passing by      7% Flyer      4% Other website

**Q19. To help navigate the sale, did you....? (Check all that apply)**

22% Print off information prior to sale      70% Follow signage along Hwy 200  
 42% Pick up a Sanders County Ledger newspaper      4% Use a handheld device while shopping

**Q20. Please rate your satisfaction with the Sanders County Yard Sale:**

	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Mean</u>
n=139 Organization of the event	5%	1%	8%	29%	55%	2%	4.33
n=137 Sale host interaction	4%	2%	6%	30%	58%	2%	4.41
n=136 Traffic flow	4%	2%	7%	33%	51%	2%	4.30
n=138 Variety of sales	4%	4%	7%	33%	51%	1%	4.29
n=135 Signage/directions	4%	6%	14%	28%	45%	2%	4.10
n=129 Sale route	5%	2%	12%	33%	46%	4%	4.25

**Q21. What is your age? Range=18-79, Mean=56**

**Q22. What is your gender? n=143**

28% Male  
 72% Female

**Q22. When might you come to the Sanders County Yard Sale again? n=137**

93% Next year      5% Within 5 years      2% Never

**Q23. Please tell us what you liked about the Sanders County Yard Sale.**

See Appendix B

**Q24. Please tell us what you did not like about the Sanders County Yard Sale.**

See Appendix B

**Q25. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?**

See Appendix B



## Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

Q26. Please tell us what you liked about the Sanders County Yard Sale.

A lot of variety and fun finds.
A lot of variety.
A variety of sales and the friendliness of the sellers.
A variety of things to buy.
Advertise in Lincoln County
Affordable needs
All of the different items and the food.
All the stuff and baked goods that I cannot live without.
All the variety
Beautiful scenery and lots of other stuff to do plus lots of variety in the sales.
Cheap deals
Concentration of sales.
Convenience, nice social event
Different things.
Everything!
Everything.
Everything.
Excitement of shoppers! Guys with wives and kids. Everyone is happy, like Black Friday but way more fun.
Finding good deals.
Finding good stuff
Finding treasures.
Food.
Friendly neighbors and lots of bargains
Friendly people
Fun event.
Fun to find treasures.
Fun, LOTS of variety!
Fun.
Garage sale
Get to see stuff and see people I haven't seen for a while.
Good as is.
Good organization and a lot of sellers.
Good prices and the variety.
Great deals and a scenic drive.
Great for local economy! (And fun!)
Great sale stuff - great prices, great customer service
I have come every year for 5 years.
I just like yard sales.
I like it the way it is.
I live here.
I would have a sale at my house but require Saturday only. I will not, cannot do Sunday.
Information in papers.
Interesting and something to do.
It is fine the way it is, and the people are friendly.
It is fun!
It was nice and convenient to drive to a lot of different sales.
It was very nice.
It's fun to see people.
It's fun.
It's raining and you're still open
Like the idea.
Look forward to an all at once yard sale.
Lots of sales at same time
Lots of stuff and people
Lots of them
Many sales.
Need more sales along the route - saw no signs in or around Thompson Falls
Nothing, very disappointed.

Paper ads and grouping.
People are friendly and the scenery is beautiful
Perfect!
Pop-up sales are nice too. The whole day planning the route. Different stuff at reasonable prices.
Sales!
Shopping at home.
Shopping for school clothes.
Simply a fun event.
So many concentrated in one area.
So many places with a great variety
Social event
Social event and good stuff, keep it up.
Social interaction and a variety of sales were good.
Taking my wife around.
The area and the friendly people.
The choices and the prices
The people, the variety
The possibility of good deals, especially on guns
The prices and the social interaction were good.
The variety and the prices were good.
This is an opportunity for folks to have a yard sale with more folks attending.
Treasures
Variety
Variety
Variety of things to buy
Very well organized.
Visiting old friends and making new acquaintances while finding treasures.

Q27. Please tell us what you did not like about the Sanders County Yard Sale.

All the sales started on Friday - would have come a day earlier. Last year spent about \$500 - this year about \$30.
Different start times.
Fun
Give better directions to sales. Provide bigger signs and place for advance notice of turning off the road.
Had trouble finding the website and addresses.
Hard to find signs (flagging helps).
I needed a map.
It rained today.
Item I wanted was overpriced.
Last Friday sale date. This questionnaire is way too long!
Like it all
Liked it all
Loved it!
Needs to start on Friday.
No sale on Friday
Not a thing
Not as busy this year.
Not much stuff - but I got some.
Nothing
Nothing.
Nothing.
Nothing.
Nothing.
Over all - nice sales, friendly hosts.
Place the signs farther from the sale locations.
rain
Rain
Rain :( Better luck next year
Rain, too far between locations.
Rain.
Raining.

Signs along roads need to be a different color. They look like Realtor signs.
Some of the sales people.
Some people were extremely high priced.
Sundays rather than Fridays.
The lack of deals on stuff I wanted and lack of visibility of the signs.
The rain :(
The rain and the signs.
The rain.
The weather over which you have no control.
There's a lot of crap out there.
Too decentralized. We drove all over, way off the highway for one sale at a time.
Using Friday was absolutely BAD planning! If you change the event for locals, out of town people didn't know.
Wasn't all in one place.
Weather and rain.
Would like more Fri. Sales

Q28. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?

Better signage by individuals
Better signage location
Better signs
Better, bigger, and more advanced signage.
Bigger and brighter signage.
Bigger and more noticeable signs.
Bigger signs and maybe some slow merging traffic signs.
Bigger signs.
Bright signs. Start all sales on same day.
Brighter signage and color continuity.
Brighter signs
Brighter signs - fluorescent so you can see long before you get there.
Brighter signs.
Change color of signs.
Discrepancy on the start time in trout creek, 7am vs. 9am.
Encourage more residents to join in the sale.
Get all the area's sales into town, such as one for Plains, one for T.C., etc.
Get input/data from your (sellers) before you make major changes!
Get the signs out earlier. Bright colored and bigger signs.
Give each participant a map for locating all the sales.
Advance notice, emphasis/awareness in website/advertising. Ask other groups to share information at meetings.
Give more advanced notice at sale. Place signs further from the driveways.
Go back to Friday
Great!
If people could put up a sign before their drive way. When you are going 70mph it's hard to stop.
It needs to start on Friday.
Make the website clear on sale days for each sale.
Map needs addresses of sites - No landmarks on map
Map sight could be more user friendly.
More obvious signs and clear sign directions.
More roadside signs
More signs and participants.
More signs.
More signs.
More signs.
More!
Most people are broke at the end of the month. The event needs to be the first week of the month.
Need brighter signs (colored).
"No.
none
none
None
None

None - all good!
None - well run
None, great event.
None.
Order dryer weather.
Perfect.
Pick July for better weather.
Put a map in paper, or a link.
Random "non-yard sale" locations.
Signage could be better, maybe florescent. More specific news ads and better directions.
Signage visibility, color, and the size of the lettering. Do not close early. Misleading ads about sales on Hwy. 200.
Signing little longer and more color.
Signs, more bold color, and not yellow!
Start all at the same time.
Start on Friday.
Start times reasonably at the same time.
There wouldn't be any
Use the Trout creek Park for a central location, maybe??
Yard sale lettering on the green arrow signs.

