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# 2015 Montana State High School Rodeo Finals

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Kalispell, Montana

Megan Tanner Schultz, M.S.

# **2015 Montana State High School Rodeo Finals**

## **Kalispell, Montana**

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Case Study Report 2015-8

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## **Abstract**

This study was conducted for the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitor Bureau to provide insight into the characteristics of attendees to the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals event. Paper surveys were completed by 154 attendees of the event. Results show that 93% of attendees were residents of Montana and of those 67% came from outside of Flathead County. Visitors to the Flathead Valley area spent an average of 3.72 nights in Kalispell. More people spent money on restaurant/bar, hotel/motel and retail goods while visiting the area than other spending categories. In last year's event hotels/motels received the highest total dollars during the event, but in 2015 restaurant/bar was the spending category that received the most money. Respondents to the survey reported total spending of \$91,753 in the Flathead Valley. Results provide event organizers and the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce/CVB with useful data for future event planning, making improvements to the event, event marketing/promotion, and understanding visitor spending associated with the event.

## **Executive Summary**

The Montana High School Rodeo Finals attracted mostly out-of-county Montana residents to the Flathead Valley area. The attendees of the event make important economic contributions to the Flathead Valley area. The results of the study are worth considering for future planning if the Montana State High School Rodeo Association returns to Kalispell for another rodeo event.

- 93% of out-of-county visitors spent at least one night away from home with the average time away of 5.18 nights. Of those nights, an average of 3.72 were spent in Kalispell.
- More money was spent by respondents in restaurant/bar (\$21,081), hotel/motel/b&b (\$18,734), and retail goods (\$16,153) than any other spending categories.
- 39% of respondents reported staying in hotel/motel, followed by 30% at the Majestic Valley Arena.
- Attendees were mostly travelling with their immediate family (40%) or friends/family (31%). The average travel group size was 3.34 people (average number of people represented in a spending group).
- Respondents traveled with a variety of age categories in their group – the highest percentages were 11-17 year olds (51%), 45-54 years old (46%) and 35-44 years old (37%). Event attendees were mostly school-aged participants of the rodeo and their families.
- People planned for this event ahead of time: 34% indicated that they planned to attend over six months before the event and 28% planned 1-6 months in advance. Attendees heard about the event mostly from word of mouth (40%), a group/club (37%), or the event website (21%).
- Overall, attendees of the event were very satisfied or satisfied with the Montana State High School Rodeo, and 76% of respondents indicated that they would attend the event next year.

## **Management Implications**

Event attendees are traveling from all over the state of Montana, and even some from other states, to attend the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals. This event brings both resident and nonresident visitors to Kalispell and the Flathead Valley area, and the attendees of the event make a variety of monetary contributions while visiting.

A large percentage of people attended the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals event with their families, making it a fun family event. Organizers can focus on accommodating families, with a focus on the youth participants and other attendees. This can be accomplished by ensuring that there are plenty of youth/family activities in addition to the rodeo since many rodeo participants/families stayed in the event area for almost four nights.

It is recommended that the organizers review the respondents' comments from Appendix B to gain insight into people's likes and dislikes of the arena (camping and power issues as well as sound system comments), event activities, concessions/vendors, and other aspects of the event/facilities. Changes based on this input could help in bringing back the high school state rodeo finals and other events to the Majestic Valley Arena and Kalispell in the future.

## Introduction

The Montana State High School Rodeo Finals was hosted in Kalispell, Montana over six days from June 9<sup>th</sup> through June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Majestic Valley Arena, an indoor equestrian facility, was the venue for the event. This was the second consecutive year the event was held at this location.

This event is organized by the Montana High School Rodeo Association, a branch of the National High School Rodeo Association. Over 1,100 rodeos are held every year by the National High School Rodeo Association and 12,500 students are involved in the competitions. Rodeos are held throughout forty-one states, five Canadian Provinces, and Australia. Student competitors have the opportunity to qualify for national rodeo events, develop their rodeo skills, and earn academic scholarships.

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the 2015 Montana State High School Rodeo Finals event with an understanding of attendees at the rodeo, their spending patterns in the Flathead Valley area, levels of satisfaction with different aspects of the rodeo event, as well as other information for the event planners.

## Methods

Data was collected by surveyors who intercepted participants and spectators 18 years of age or older for on-site completion of the survey during the six 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 Montana State High School Rodeo study include the following:

- Data was collected by Kalispell area volunteers who received a short training from ITRR's survey contact person and the Kalispell CVB's lead surveyor on how to intercept people and obtain completed surveys.
- ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.
- Only 154 valid surveys were collected, a relatively small sample size.

## Results

Of the 154 valid responses, only five percent (8 people) selected that they were registered participants in the rodeo and 94 percent (144 people) were spectators. There seemed to be some confusion with family members (but not student rodeo participants) identifying themselves as a "registered participant" since the lowest age reported by a survey respondent was 21, therefore making it unlikely that they were high school participants. However, of the spectators, 77 percent (103 people) were in a group with someone who was a registered participant. Of all of the respondents, 93 percent (143 people) were from Montana and seven percent (10 people) were from out of state (see Tables 1 and 2 for a breakdown of residence). Of all respondents, 26 percent (39 people) were from Flathead County while 67 percent (103 people) were from other Montana counties.

**Table 1: Residence of all Respondents**

Place of Residence	# of total	% of total
Flathead County	39	26%
Other MT County	103	67%
Total Montana = 142		
U.S. State	10	7%
Total all Residences	152	100%

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

U.S. Residence	# of respondents
Arizona	2
California	1
Idaho	2
Nebraska	1
South Carolina	1
West Virginia	1
Wyoming	2
Total	10

The mean age of respondents was 50 years old. Of those who were from outside Flathead County and responded to the survey, 93 percent reported that they spent at least one night away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents (51 percent) spent four nights in Montana. The average number of nights in Kalispell was 3.72 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 respondents who reside outside of Flathead 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 Flathead Valley area in the following categories: accommodations, restaurant or bar, groceries or snacks, gasoline, transportation, auto rental, retail goods, entertainment or recreation, and local transportation.

Table 3 presents the expenditure data of only the respondents who reported spending money in these 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 \$91,753.

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

Expenditure Category	Mean expenditures of attendees <u>who reported that they spent money in these categories</u>	% of respondents who reported spending money in each category	Total dollars spent in each category <u>by respondents who spent</u>
Restaurant/Bar	\$226.68 (n=93)	65%	\$21,081
Motel/Hotel/B&B	\$468.35 (n=40)	28%	\$18,734
Retail goods	\$293.69 (n=55)	39%	\$16,153
Gasoline/diesel	\$140.94 (n=90)	63%	\$12,685
Groceries/Snacks	\$132.67 (n=73)	51%	\$9,685
Campground	\$164.44 (n=45)	32%	\$7,400
Entertainment/Recreation	\$155.00 (n=33)	23%	\$5,115
Auto rental	\$450.00 (n=2)	1%	\$900
Local transportation	\$0.00 (n=0)	0%	\$0
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$91,753</b>

## Appendix A- Results

- Q1. Are you a registered participant of the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals? n=152**  
5% Yes (Skip to Q2.)      95% No
- Q1a. Does your group include someone who is a registered participant of the Rodeo Finals? n=134**  
77% Yes      23% No
- Q2. Are you a resident of Montana? n=153**  
93% Yes      7% No (skip to Q4.)
- Q3. Do you reside in Flathead County? n=142**  
28% Yes (skip to Q14. on back)      72% No (skip to Q5.)
- Q4. In what state, province, or foreign country do you reside?**  
See Tables 1 and 2.
- Q5. Is this your first time visiting the Flathead Valley area? n=114**  
8% Yes      92% No
- Q6. Was attending this event your primary reason for being in the area? n=113**  
94% Yes      6% No
- Q7. For what other reasons are you visiting the area? (Check all that apply.) n=72**  
22% Vacation/recreation/pleasure      3% Just passing through      3% Business/convention/meeting  
16% Visiting friends/relatives      18% Shopping
- Q8. For this event, how many nights did you spend away from home? n=110, mean=5.18**  
7% 0 (skip to Q.12)      3% 1      6% 3      20% 5      5% 7      0% 9  
4% 2      45% 4      8% 6      2% 8      2% 10 or more
- Q9. How many of those nights were in Montana? n=101, mean=5.44**  
0% 0      4% 2      51% 4      9% 6      2% 8      1% 10 or more  
3% 1      6% 3      20% 5      5% 7      0% 9
- Q10. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in Kalispell? n=100, mean=3.72**  
13% 0      3% 2      45% 4      7% 6      0% 8      0% 10 or more  
3% 1      6% 3      19% 5      4% 7      0% 9
- Q10a. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in other Flathead Valley locations? n=100, mean=0.61**  
86% 0      1% 2      6% 4      0% 6      0% 8      0% 10 or more  
4% 1      0% 3      0% 5      3% 7      0% 9
- Q11. In what type of accommodation(s) did you stay in Kalispell or the Flathead Valley? (Check all that apply.) n=100**  
39% Hotel/motel/B&B      1% Public land camping      1% Second home/cabin/condo  
30% Majestic Valley Arena      17% Private campground      1% Resort/condominium  
0% Rental cabin/home      10% Home of friend/relative      5% 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 Flathead Valley 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 Flathead Valley**

Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast

Campground

**FOOD in Flathead Valley**

Restaurant/bar

Groceries/snacks

**TRANSPORTATION in Flathead Valley**

Gasoline/diesel

Local transportation

Auto rental

**RETAIL/SERVICES in Flathead Valley**

Retail goods

Entertainment/recreation

**Q13. How many people does the above spending represent (including yourself, i.e., your travel group size)? n=105; mean = 3.34**

5% 1	36% 3	7% 5	2% 7	0% 9	1% more than 10
25% 2	20% 4	3% 6	1% 8	1% 10	

**Q14. What option best describes the group with whom you attended this event? n=149**

6% Self	40% Immediate family	31% Family/friends	2% Business associates
10% Couple	7% Extended family	3% Friends	2% Organized group/club

**Q15. Please select all the ages represented in your group: n=150 for each age category**

5% 0-5 yrs.	51% 11-17 yrs.	7% 25-34 yrs.	46% 45-54 yrs.	21% 65-74 yrs.
9% 6-10 yrs.	29% 18-24 yrs.	37% 35-44 yrs.	14% 55-64 yrs.	10% 75 and over

**Q16. What best describes your annual household income? (In US dollars) n=124**

2% Less than \$20,000	23% \$60,000 to \$79,999	6% \$150,000 to \$199,999
9% \$20,000 to \$39,999	19% \$80,000 to \$99,999	6% \$200,000 and over
16% \$40,000 to \$59,999	20% \$100,000 to \$149,999	

**Q17. How long before this event did you make plans to attend? n=142**

6% The day of the event	18% 1-4 weeks before the event	34% Over 6 months before the event
14% 1-7 days before the event	28% 1-6 months before the event	

**Q18. How did you hear about the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals? (Check all that apply.)**

n=136 per selection

40% Word of mouth	4% Posters	37% Group or club	15% Social media
11% Newspaper	4% Magazine	0% Retail outlet	13% Other website
10% Radio	5% Direct Mail	<1% Flyer	
4% Television	8% E-mail from event planners	21% Event website	



**Q19. Please rate your satisfaction with the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals:**

Satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Mean	Total respondents
Organization of the event	0%	4%	16%	32%	48%	<1%	4.27	n=143
Event staff	0%	2%	8%	35%	54%	1%	4.44	n=144
Cost of the event	1%	4%	23%	30%	41%	1%	4.09	n=143
Location of the event	1%	5%	10%	24%	59%	<1%	4.36	n=144
Concessions available	<1%	2%	8%	40%	49%	<1%	4.36	n=141
Number of people at the event	<1%	4%	15%	34%	46%	1%	4.25	n=144
Parking	<1%	4%	8%	36%	51%	0%	4.33	n=144
Sound system	5%	5%	8%	32%	50%	0%	4.17	n=145
Variety of activities	3%	1%	16%	38%	40%	3%	4.18	n=144
Signage/directions	0%	1%	12%	43%	42%	1%	4.30	n=141
Cleanliness	<1%	3%	5%	41%	50%	<1%	4.39	n=145
Availability of restrooms	<1%	1%	7%	39%	51%	<1%	4.41	n=142

**Q20. What is your age? Range=21-83, mean=50.34**

**Q21. What is your gender? n=151**

30% Male 70% Female

**Q22. When might you come to the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals again? n=147**

76% Next Year 14% Within 5 Years 10% Never

**Q23. Please tell us what you liked about the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals.**

See Appendix B

**Q24. Please tell us what you did not like about the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals.**

See Appendix B

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

See Appendix B

## Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

**Q23. Please tell us what you liked about the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals.**

A beautiful place for a rodeo
A lot of kids involved. Keeps them off the street.
All good- competition family
Always enjoy taking care of the rodeo kids
Always great
Anything to do with rodeo and kids are involved.
Atmosphere
Atmosphere in general
Attitude of all workers, facilities, attitude of all participants, clown, entertainment.
Close to home- nice facility.
Close to home. Nice facility.
Competition
Everything
Everything
Everything
Everything good
Everything. It's nice.
Excellent facility- arena, staff, parking, showers are all very good.
Excitement for kids, final for the season
Exhibition by youth
Facilities
Facilities are nice. Parking is good. Food is good.
Facility is great. Volunteers are great.
Facility, area
Familiar friendship of all these competitors together
Family Friendly
Family fun!
Friends, nice facility, competition.
Fun to watch young people compete.
Good facility
Good opportunities for the students.
Good support from local businesses. Friendly staff and volunteers.
Good, clean event for area
Grandson participating
Great atmosphere
Great event, great venue
Great facilities! No other place like this in Montana that can host this event in this manner. No worries about weather conditions affecting performances.
Great facility!
Great facility. Beautiful area.
Great footing in arena! Good layout and good setup! Love facility. Nice stalls and wash racks
Great location. Great venue! Very helpful, kind staff
Great people

Great setting and facility
Ground
Have kids in it
Heard about event from Chamber of Commerce. Will return if the event is in Kalispell. Cost
High school athletes
How organized and food all great.
I like that it's inside. Keeps it fair. I also like the openness of the arena.
I like the Majestic facility; not centrally located! As far as stalls, we had asked for accommodations and wasn't even looked at.
I liked the space for camping
I love the kids. Grandkids
Indoor arena
Indoor arena. Rob Brisendine (?) has been VERY helpful each year!
Inside arena
It moved along fast.
It was a fun event. Visiting with all the people.
Just love watching the sport of rodeo
Kids finished with high school rodeo (reason for not returning). Seems to be well run. Not a fan of having mandatory meeting and contestants not show and still be able to compete when it was explicitly stated DO NOT ATTEND/DO NOT COMPETE. How is this fair to those who do?!
Know a lot of people that their kids are participants.
Location
Location- beautiful vacation spot. Excellent venue to accommodate this event.
Location, facility
Locations
Love that this was an inspiration for my children 5,9,12, & 14
Love the facilities! Stalls by parking are awesome. People are nice and helpful.
Love watching the youth
My grandson was in it!
Nice arena and pens for horses.
Nice facilities! Good weather.
Nice facilities, lots of space to park, room on good ground to warm up horse, vet clinics nearby
Nice facility
Nice facility
Nice facility. Friendly volunteers
Nice location, facility
Nice to have event like this here to see High School rodeo participants from all across Montana. It's the Montana thing to do!
Parking was very easy with unloading of horse- then moving on to parking
People
People are nice. Happy families.
Rodeo is well organized
Seeing people from all over
Something different from what I do on a regular basis, yes rodeo is in my extended family.
Stock
Super fun, good atmosphere.
That it's located close and lots to do in the area.
The events

The facility was great
The friendly people and opportunity to see talented young people
The indoor arena and stalls are wonderful.
The kids
The location is beautiful and we enjoyed shopping and seeing the sites.
The location was great.
Very nice facilities
Very organized, location, clean, indoor arena.
Very professional!
Very well organized. Event was smooth
Very well run; things ran smooth
Watching our grandson.
Watching the kids
Watching the kids participate
Watching young people excel at a sport rooted in Montana's heritage.
Well organized
Well organized
Well organized. Drop off and moving to camping very helpful.
Wholesome entertainment
Will return next year if event is in Kalispell

**Q 24. Please tell us what you did not like about the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals.**

1 shower
700 miles to event
Air movement and heat in arena killed me! Way too hot. Dusty in arena. Can't hear sound system in barns camping area/what's happening
Arena got too hot
Breakaway stock was poor and uneven. Kids need a souvenir in their packet- a T-shirt from the event. More sawdust should be provided
Camping could be assigned ahead of time. Electricity didn't work at my camp spot.
Camping issues
Closer to home???
Cost of food- no dance or other activities that had been advertised.
Cost of required stalls- minimum 4 nights @ \$80
Cost of stalls for 4 nights was mandatory.
Cost of stalls, bad power setup. Had to move 1/2 through stay. Very unhappy.
Cost. Time frame for contestants
Cutting and reining on one day was too much
Cutting and working cowhorse judges
Daughter hit two poles
Everything is fine.
Had power issues. Sewer dump was too expensive
Hard to hear sound system. Need to start at 4:30, 6pm too late
Hearing that it may not come back. Lack of local media coverage.
Help in arena was unprofessional and incompetent during Slack, Thurs. Announcer also uninformed.
I had major issues with my power at the camping site. The event staff was very rude to me when I brought it up.

It was all good. This is the best venue for rodeo finals. Excellent staff, facilities, location.
Lengthy drive. Had to be here Wednesday, son didn't compete until Friday night.
Liked it all.
Location
Long slack- local people not even know the event was happening. Need media coverage.
Loudness
More vendors
Music at times was too loud during Thursday slack
Music overrides announcer at times.
Music stinks- volume especially
N/A
N/A
N/A
Need more evening events for contestants.
No activities for kids most of the time
No beer
No HS Rodeo coats for sale! Evening Event cancelled.
Not much for roughies to do, have to be here so early
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing- announcer doesn't know Forsyth
Nothing- it has been great. Awesome job
Nothing- thrilled with atmosphere
Organization slow on ordering prized
Parking- ground is terrible for camper trailers. Plus, after we were already setup we had to move because of power issues. People didn't reserve spots were hooking up and tripping system.
Power didn't always work
Power issues
Power issues!
Power problem for camping
Pretty overall satisfied.
Shooting with bull
So far west for Eastern Montana participants. Cattle- questionable
Some folks had trouble with power- we brought a generator in case.
Sound system hard to understand
Sound system too loud. No stall available.
Sound system was too loud.
The admissions
The parents of a few
The restrooms for camping are inadequate. We keep losing power at our camp. Last year the prizes for 2-4 were inadequate. Sound system was too loud.
The sheriff that was here on Wednesday was rude and disrespectful to a young lade and her family- no excuse to treat a contestant like that for parking in such a way that he clearly had no clue at all what the situation was or should be. He

came off as self important.
Too far, needs to be more centrally located. Not very well run.
Too many contestants, need to have a minimum of 50 points to come to state
Traffic in and around Kalispell
Using indoor arena- no ventilation
What's not to like!

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

A scoreboard with time and ratings
Activate scoreboard
All good!
Announcer could have given info about the competitors!
Area too hot. No air movement. Additional dust control would be nice. Would like to hear announcer in barns and camp area to keep track of schedule
Awesome- the kids are loving it!
Beer
Better announcer
Better cattle in breakaway
Better correspondence to events/schedules. Need water truck to come by the covered outside stalls. Open back gate earlier and on a time schedule.
Better electrical hook-ups
Better ground in arena
Better hook-ups, less stall rent for horses.
Better local coverage.
Better organization before you arrive
Better organization for camping. It would have been nice to park with our district
Better selection/variety for souvenirs (MHSRA). Different announcer for slack- liked the 2014 announcer on Thursday
Better stock
Bigger garbage cans in camping area.
Centrally located. Judges, timers, etc. from both sides of the state.
Clean bleachers. Turn down the sound.
Communicate facilities available to campers
Ear plugs for horses, spectators, children, etc. Scoreboard. Medical team at the shoots
Encourage audience applause for contestants.
Everything is going good.
Free stuff
Get judges that know how to judge the event
Hope this rodeo finals returns here in 2016
If you say there will be a dance or comedian make it happen.
Improve the power issue
In the shooting contest, the horse should have ear plugs, too! Need a scoreboard so we can see the leaders. Need a tent that is staffed with medical personnel, doctor, nurse, for assessment of participants.
Just the power thing. We enjoy it here- great job!
Less dust

Making sure the power supplies are enough to support all the trailers. Power was taken away from the trailer while gone and they didn't tell us they were going to do it.
More activities for the family to enjoy.
More info available on line before and during event
More info for events on the website
More open camping for outside people or visitors.
More restrooms in camping area
N/A
Need activity local and on ground for small children. Power problem
Need water truck to come by more.
No activities for small children. Need more garbage cans. Do not have facility for camping: Great Falls, Bozeman, Missoula. We like Kalispell
None
None
None
Nothing I can think of!
Only suggestion is to "please" consider the State Finals to return here.
Parking could be more defined...some cars are 3 deep?! Yikes! (hoping that's not me when I leave)
Please put porta pots in campground
Please work with others to keep this facility open!
Provide 2 wristbands in packets for parents
Roughies could check in later. Maybe more sponsor goodies for kids- coupons, opportunities for other prizes!
See you next year right here!
Sell more high school rodeo things- jackets, shirts
Send the water truck through the campground twice a day- dust was horrible for the whole event.
Showers
Some activities for youth participants are Friday and Saturday evening
Take only kids with 50 points or more
Take some lessons from people who have run big rodeos. Listen to the parents and the contestants.
The power needs improved. We have a person in a wheelchair that needs air conditioning. The power kept kicking off.
Turn sound down a bit. Mounted shooting just before the grand entry was stupid and dangerous for kids in warmup. Power situation. More vendors.
Water arena!
Will attend even when in Kalispell area
Would be nice to be able to purchase shoeings and feed more easily, better access to someone to open stalls. Having 2 staffed office in horse barn for all of this
You good!