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Brian Battaglia
The University of Montana-Missoula

Megan Schultz
The University of Montana-Missoula

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An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival 2014

Butte, Montana

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

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Prepared by

Brian G. Battaglia, Research Assistant

Megan Tanner Schultz, M.S.

Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research

College of Forestry and Conservation

The University of Montana

Missoula, MT 59812

www.itrr.umt.edu

Case Study Report 2014-20

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Abstract

This study was conducted for the Montana Gaelic Cultural Society non-profit, to provide insight into the characteristics of attendees of the 2014 An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival. Paper surveys were completed by 218 attendees of the event. Results show that 83% of respondents were residents of Montana and of those Montana residents, 51% were from Butte-Silver Bow County. Out-of-county respondents spent an average of 2.94 nights in Butte-Silver Bow County and more people spent money on restaurant/bar purchases while visiting the area than any other spending categories. Restaurant/bar purchases received the highest total dollars spent during the event. Respondents to the survey reported a total spending of \$40,176.00 in the Butte-Silver Bow County area. Results provide event organizers and the Montana Gaelic Cultural Society 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 An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival attracted many out-of-county Montana residents (33%) and out-of-state (17%) visitors to the Butte-Silver Bow County area. The attendees of the event make important economic contributions to the Butte-Silver Bow County area. The results of the study are worth considering for future planning of the An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival.

- 69% of visitors who reside outside of Butte-Silver Bow County spent at least one night away from home. The mean number of nights spent in Butte-Silver Bow County was 2.94.
- More money was spent by these out-of-county visitors in restaurant/bar (\$8,540.00), hotel/motel/b&b (\$8,432.00), and retail goods (\$4,322.00) than other spending categories. 83% of respondents reported that they were spending for a travel group size of at least two or more people (including respondent).
- 48% of respondents reported staying in a hotel/motel/b&b, followed by 31% staying in the home of a friend or relative.
- Attendees were mostly travelling with immediate family (29%) or as a couple (29%). The average travel group size was 2.74 people (travel group spending size).
- Respondents traveled with a variety of age categories in their group– the highest percentages were 55-64 years old (46%) and 45-54 years old (31%).
- Attendees heard about the event mostly from word of mouth (61%) or the newspaper (55%).
- Overall, attendees of the event were very satisfied or satisfied with An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival, and 88% of respondents indicated that they would attend the event next year.

Management Implications

Survey results indicate that An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival visitors are travelling from outside of the Butte-Silver Bow County area to attend the event. This event brings both resident and nonresident visitors to the Butte-Silver Bow County area, and the attendees of the event make a variety of monetary contributions while visiting.

A large majority of people who attended An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival were residents of Montana, with 51% residing in Butte-Silver Bow County. Non-resident visitors bring new money into Montana and make valuable economic contributions to the area. Event organizers can work to increase the number of non-resident visitors who are staying and spending in the Butte-Silver Bow County area for future events.

It is recommended that the organizers review the respondents' comments from Appendix B to gain more insight into people's likes and dislikes of the festival's organization, music, vendors, and other aspects of the event. Changes based on this input could help bring back repeat visitors to Butte-Silver Bow County in the future.

Introduction

The 2014 An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival was hosted in Butte, Montana over three days from August 8th through August 10th, 2014. The festival is organized by the non-profit Montana Gaelic Cultural Society. An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival is a free cultural and heritage event with a variety of activities including music, dancing, food, workshops, and speakers. The festival is held in historic uptown Butte and attracts visitors from around the region.

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the 2014 An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival with an understanding of the characteristics of visitors to the event, visitor spending in Butte-Silver Bow County, and levels of satisfaction with different aspects of the event.

Methods

Surveyors intercepted event visitors 18 years of age or older for on-site completion of a questionnaire during the three 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 An Ri Ra Montana Irish Festival study include the following:

- Data was collected by Butte area volunteers who received a short training from ITRR's survey contact person, Brendan McDonough, on how to intercept people and how to obtain completed surveys.
- ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.
- Only 218 valid surveys were collected, a relatively small sample size.

Results

Of the 218 valid respondents, 83 percent (182 people) were from Montana and 17 percent (36 people) were from out-of-state or Canada (see Tables 1 and 2). Of all Montana respondents, 51 percent (111 people) were from Butte-Silver Bow County while 33 percent (71 people) were from other Montana counties.

Table 1: Residence of all Respondents

Place of Residence	# of total	% of total
Butte-Silver Bow County	111	51%
Other MT County	71	33%
Montana=182		
U.S. State	30	14%
Canada	1	<1%
Non-Montana Unspecified	5	2%
Non-resident=36		
Total all Residences	218	100%

Table 2: Out-of-State and Canadian Residences

Residence	# of respondents
Alaska	3
Arizona	3
California	2
Idaho	4
Illinois	1
Michigan	1
Nebraska	1
Nevada	2
New York	1
North Dakota	1
Other	5
Saskatchewan, Canada	1
Texas	1
Utah	4
Washington	3
Wisconsin	1
Wyoming	2

The mean age of respondents was 54.37 years old. Of those who were from outside Butte-Silver Bow County and responded to the survey, 73 people reported that they spent at least one night away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents (39 percent) spent two nights in Montana. The mean number of nights spent in Butte-Silver Bow County was 2.94 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 event visitors. 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 Butte-Silver Bow County area in the following categories: accommodations, restaurant or bar, groceries or snacks, gasoline, transportation, auto rental, retail goods, and entertainment or recreation.

Table 4 presents the expenditure data of only the Butte-Silver Bow County resident respondents who reported spending money in the categories. Table 5 presents the expenditure data of only the non-resident respondents (those who reside outside of Butte-Silver Bow County) 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 \$40,176.00.

Table 3 – Expenditure Data: Expenditures calculated using only residents (those who reside in Butte-Silver Bow County) who spent.

Expenditure Category	Mean expenditures of residents <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	\$70.22 (n=50)	45%	\$3,511.00
Groceries/snacks	\$93.89 (n=27)	24%	\$2,535.00
Gasoline	\$70.43 (n=27)	24%	\$1,902.00
Hotel/motel/b&b	\$383.33 (n=3)	3%	\$1,150.00
Retail goods	\$52.14 (n=14)	13%	\$730.00
Entertainment/recreation	\$53.64 (n=11)	10%	\$590.00
Auto rental	\$200.00 (n=1)	1%	\$200.00
Local transportation	\$0.00 (n=0)	0%	\$0.00
Campground	\$0.00 (n=0)	0%	\$0.00
TOTAL			\$10,618.00

Table 4 – Expenditure Data: Expenditures calculated using only non-residents (those who reside outside of Butte-Silver Bow County) who spent.

Expenditure Category	Mean expenditures of non-residents <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	\$101.67 (n=84)	79%	\$8,540.00
Hotel/motel/b&b	\$263.50 (n=32)	30%	\$8,432.00
Retail goods	\$113.74 (n=38)	36%	\$4,322.00
Gasoline	\$68.88 (n=56)	52%	\$3,857.00
Groceries/snacks	\$66.85 (n=36)	34%	\$2,407.00
Entertainment/recreation	\$42.86 (n=22)	21%	\$943.00
Auto rental	\$160.00 (n=4)	4%	\$640.00
Campground	\$82.60 (n=5)	5%	\$413.00
Local transportation	\$2.00 (n=2)	2%	\$4.00
TOTAL			\$29,558.00

Spending data for in-county respondents (those who reside within Butte-Silver Bow County) should be looked at with caution. Typically in-county spending is not included when identifying money spent in a community for an event. Money generated outside of a community, brought in by non-locals, and then spent has a greater impact on the economy than local spending. Local spending simply recirculates within the community.

Appendix A- Results

Q1. Are you a resident of Montana? n=218

84% Yes 16% No (skip to Q3.)

Q2. Do you reside in Butte-Silver Bow County? n=182

61% Yes (skip to Q11. on back) 39% No (skip to Q4.)

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

See Tables 1 and 2.

Q4. Is this your first time visiting Butte? n=106

10% Yes 90% No

Q5. Was attending this event your primary reason for being in the area? n=106

81% Yes 19% No

Q6. For what other reasons are you visiting the area? (Check all that apply.) n=75

18% Vacation/recreation/pleasure 2% Just passing through <1% Business/convention/meeting
17% Visiting friends/relatives 4% Shopping

Q7. For this event, how many nights did you spend away from home? n=105, Mean=3.05

31% 0 (skip to Q.11) 19% 1 10% 3 3% 5 2% 7 0% 9
25% 2 4% 4 3% 6 0% 8 5% 10 or more

Q8. How many of those nights were in Montana? n=69, Mean=4.32

1% 0 39% 2 6% 4 1% 6 1% 8 12% 10 or more
23% 1 9% 3 4% 5 1% 7 1% 9

Q9. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in Butte? n=71, Mean=2.94

17% 0 39% 2 7% 4 0% 6 0% 8 3% 10 or more
23% 1 10% 3 1% 5 0% 7 0% 9

Q10. In what type of accommodation(s) did you stay in Butte? (Check all that apply.) n=68

48% Hotel/motel/B&B 9% Private campground 2% Resort/condominium
6% Rental cabin/home 31% Home of friend/relative 2% Guest ranch
2% Public land camping 5% Second home/cabin/condo 2% Vehicle in parking lot

Q11. 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 Butte-Silver Bow County area in each of the following categories. If you did not spend money in a category, please leave it blank. (See Tables 3 and 4 for expenditures).

ACCOMMODATIONS in Butte area

Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast

Campground

FOOD in Butte area

Restaurant/bar

Groceries/snacks

TRANSPORTATION in Butte area

Gasoline/diesel

Local transportation

Auto rental

RETAIL/SERVICES in Butte area

Retail goods

Entertainment/recreation

Q12. How many people does the above spending represent (including yourself, i.e., your travel group size)? n=175

17% 1	9% 3	6% 5	2% 7	0% 9	1% more than 10
47% 2	14% 4	3% 6	0% 8	0% 10	

Q13. What option best describes the group with whom you attended this event? n=202

6% Self	29% Immediate family	22% Family/friends	0% Business associates
29% Couple	7% Extended family	5% Friends	1% Organized group/club

Q14. Please select all the ages represented in your group: n=201 for each age category

12% 0-5 yrs.	17% 11-17 yrs.	19% 25-34 yrs.	31% 45-54 yrs.	30% 65-74 yrs.
15% 6-10 yrs.	15% 18-24 yrs.	22% 35-44 yrs.	46% 55-64 yrs.	14% 75 and over

Q15. What best describes your annual household income? (In US dollars) n=184

5% Less than \$20,000	16% \$60,000 to \$79,999	8% \$150,000 to \$199,999
18% \$20,000 to \$39,999	11% \$80,000 to \$99,999	4% \$200,000 and over
21% \$40,000 to \$59,999	17% \$100,000 to \$149,999	

Q16. How long before this event did you make plans to attend? n=195

14% The day of the event	20% 1-4 weeks before the event	31% Over 6 months before the event
16% 1-7 days before the event	19% 1-6 months before the event	

Q17. How did you hear about An Ri Ra? (Check all that apply.) n=186 per selection

61% Word of mouth	30% Posters	8% Group or club	24% Social media
55% Newspaper	6% Magazine	4% Retail outlet	5% Other website
22% Radio	<1% Direct mail	10% Flyer	
24% Television	10% E-mail - event planners	17% Event website	

Q18. Please rate your satisfaction with the An Ri Ra:

Satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Mean	Total respondents
Organization of the event	<1%	0%	2%	24%	74%	0%	4.71	n=195
Event staff	1%	0%	2%	18%	79%	<1%	4.75	n=194
Cost of the event	1%	0%	2%	9%	86%	2%	4.86	n=195
Location of the event	2%	<1%	2%	16%	80%	0%	4.72	n=195
Concessions available	1%	2%	6%	33%	57%	2%	4.48	n=196
Number of people at the event	<1%	2%	8%	32%	57%	1%	4.46	n=193
Parking	2%	7%	16%	29%	44%	3%	4.14	n=196
Sound system(ability to hear)	<1%	<1%	2%	22%	76%	0%	4.72	n=198
Variety of activities	<1%	<1%	11%	25%	62%	1%	4.51	n=193
Signage/directions	<1%	2%	9%	26%	58%	5%	4.52	n=193
Cleanliness	<1%	0%	3%	22%	75%	0%	4.71	n=197
Availability of restrooms	<1%	0%	1%	24%	73%	2%	4.73	n=195

Q19. What is your age? Range=19-84, Mean=54.37

Q20. What is your gender? n=203

37% Male
63% Female

Q21. When might you come to the An Ri Ra again?

88% Next Year 11% Within 5 Years 1% Never

Q22. Please tell us what you liked about An Ri Ra.

See Appendix B

Q23. Please tell us what you did not like about An Ri Ra.

See Appendix B

Q24. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?

See Appendix B

Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

Q22. Please tell us what you liked about An Ri Ra.

All musical events.
Always enjoy Irish music.
Awesome event.
Bands.
Beautiful view of the city at the venue location.
Being outside.
Celebrating Irish heritage.
Clean bathrooms and it is free.
Close to where I live and Irish music.
Culture, music, dancing, and dancers.
Dance music and seeing old friends.
Dancers and music.
Dancers and music.
Dancers and variety.
Dancing is a favorite.
Dublin Gulch, family friendly (bouncy castle), free, and the joy the performers had.
Entertainment family oriented.
Entertainment.
Event location and performers.
Excellent diversity of artists and an outstanding location. Tiernan rocks.
Folk music and I love the original stage.
Food.
Free.
Free and the donation option.
Free and the Solas.
Free kids activities, venues.
Friendly atmosphere.
Funnel cake and noodles.
Good music, cost, clean, and well run.
Good music.
Great family entertainment.
Great family event with great entertainment.
Great music and dancing.
Great music and nice facility, much better than on the streets.
Great music with variety and dancing.
Great music, dancing in a beautiful venue, the children dancing, local, as well as the Trinity dancers.
Great music, food, staff, dancers, and location.
Great music, great dancing, and unique talent.
Great performer.
Great venue.
Groups playing.
I enjoy traditional folk music of all cultures.
I enjoyed everything about it.

I like the new location better than downtown.
I really enjoy all of the lectures held and love the new venue.
Irish dancers and a great venue.
Irish dancers and Solas.
Irish dancers.
Irish music and heritage.
Irish music, dancers, and that it is outdoors.
Irish music, talks with friends and family, dancers, and the original venue.
Irish music.
Irish music.
It is free.
Like the music, the location, and the free admission.
Location and Irish dancing.
Location, music, and family event.
Location, price, and performers.
Love that musicians come from Ireland, and the dancers are fantastic.
Love the heritage.
Love the music and seeing folks in town.
Love the music, dancing, and vendors.
Love the new site.
Love the performers and the change of venue.
Loved the music and the dancers.
Music.
Music and a shade tent.
Music and Butte hospitality.
Music and culture.
Music and dance.
Music and dancers.
Music and dancers.
Music and dancing.
Music and family friendly.
Music and Irish dancing.
Music and location.
Music and location.
Music and people.
Music and relaxed.
Music and stories.
Music performance.
Music, dancing, and the people.
Music, entertainment, and people watching.
Music, food, and comradery.
Music, food, and fun.
Music, food, people, and family environment.

Music, people, and dancers.
Music, stage, and area.
Music, venue, and the elders.
Music.
Music.
Music.
New experience, allowed my family to experience new culture.
New venue and no cost.
Nice crowd, great music, and friendly atmosphere.
No cost to get in. I've never come before because of the ticket cost.
Opportunity to show off Butte's Irish heritage.
People and music.
Performances and trinity dancers.
Quality of bands.
Seeing my great grandchildren perform.
Solas but all music was excellent.
The bands.
The culture, music, and arts.
The dancers are great.
The dancers, the entertainment, and being outdoors.
The dancers.
The dancing and the music.
The entertainment and the people are very friendly.
The entertainment, food, and people attending.
The Friday night Solas performance was stunning. The Butte specific Irish history with fabulous music under the lighted head frame was poignant.
The gathering of outside bands and musicians.
The great entertainment, the sense of community, the friendly people, a family-friendly event, recognition of the Irish influence in Montana.
The Irish dancers and the music.
The Irish music.
The location.
The location.
The music and the archives.
The music and the dancers.
The music and the musicians.
The music and venue.
The music, dancers, and vendors.
The music.
The new venue and I enjoy this location more than Park St.
The organizers and the music.
The original perfect place.

The people, I am alone today and every person here is like a "friend".
The setting is "Awesome". Thank you for all your hard work.
The stage.
The variety of Irish music and the friendliness of the Butte people.
The venue.
The whole thing, family event, elders, and whiskey asylum.
Tiernan dancers.
Traditional music dancers.
Variety of events for free.
Variety of music and atmosphere of venue.
Variety of performers.
Venue and beverage tickets.
Very good performers.
We love all aspects, could use some golf carts.
Wonderful atmosphere, easy to attend (ie. well organized), and the music was great.
Wonderful entertainment and met new people/saw old friends.

Q23. Please tell us what you did not like about An Ri Ra.

ATM broke.
Cancellation of the main attraction due to rain.
Cliquish group that runs it.
Cold.
Cousin.
Dublin Gulch did not play long enough.
Food.
I cannot tolerate too much heat.
I enjoyed the two stages.
I miss the intimacy of the uptown venue and the wonderful natural acoustics of voices and instruments echoing between buildings.
I miss the various stages, the acoustics on park/main was amazing.
I would like to see the Tiernan dancers dance more and in the evening.
If it rains or snows (yet to be determined).
Irish food booth and coffee vendor.
Lack of shade.
Limited food concessions, no Irish food, and the weather always turns bad.
Lines for drink tickets.
More event chairs.
More handicap parking.
More shade.
More shaded areas.
Need more food vendors.
Needed more shade and seats this year.
No Cathy Ryan.
No cooler.
No Guinness.

No kettle corn.
Noisy and the people.
Not enough chairs.
Not enough food vendors.
Not enough shade.
Parking and walking.
Parking is a bit difficult.
Parking needs signs for transportation.
Parking.
Parking.
Power stages.
Rain.
Rain.
The amount of vendors was disappointing, and not enough variety.
The lack of food and merchandise vendors.
The rain.
This year it is like you are forced to watch everything. Downtown, you could pick and choose.
Tom powers. Phony Irish Brochure.
Try to get a sustaining sponsor.
Uptown shops in the main street.
Weather.

Q24. What suggestions do you have for improvements to the event?

A major sponsor would be helpful.
Advertise in paper more and tell stories about groups.
All in one venue, may have to charge but keep it reasonable.
Another stage means more volunteers.
Ask people to clean up after themselves and pick up chairs. Better recycling and a water tank to fill water bottles.
Beautiful at the original.
Better parking and more vendors.
Big tents.
Bring quarry beer up here and the popcorn.
Celtic thunder and Celtic woman.
Coverage from rain.
Easier access for people with limited mobility.
Female vocalists.
Food.
Get more people to attend.
Get the Cathy Ryan band back.
Good at the original because of the parking. Better identify the bus pick up points.
Guinness or at least a nitro stout on tap.
Hard liquor availability.
Have Dublin Gulch play longer.
Healthier food options and vendor booths.
I wish the crawfish folks were here.

Indicate on the website that people should bring their own seating, plan for both hot and cold weather. A lot of visitors do not realize Butte's elevation.
Just coolers.
Keep it in Butte and provide more beer tents.
Keep it in Butte.
Keeping it free at this site.
Kettle corn.
Kettle corn.
Liked the old format but this is great.
Long event.
Maybe better parking or more signage to the park and ride shuttle.
Maybe invite fit elders to join dance family.
Maybe more shade.
Maybe only another shade area but otherwise great.
More activities, especially for kids, and shaded areas.
More chairs, better food and concessions.
More funnel cake.
More handicap parking near gates.
More media in Montana.
More misters.
More parking.
More people.
More shade available.
More shade tents and places to fill water bottles.
More shade.
More ticket tents.
More vendors, greater variety, and parking attendants.
More vendors, more kids' stuff, maybe kid Irish dance lessons.
Move am food options at site.
Move Irish whiskey bars nearby and more stages.
Move it back to park street.
Musical workshops and organized music sessions.
Need more shade and trees.
Need more shade at the original location.
Need soap and water station with restrooms.
Parking is always a concern.
People at entrance with donation buckets, most people walk by the stationary ones.
Perhaps a second adjacent stage so there is not so much downtime between acts.
Posting of free shuttle pick up/drop off areas and parking choices on website information.
Saw Doctors or Kila! Michael Black and Family.
Seating like bleachers when down below.
Signage for location and parking. Loved the uptown location in years previous.
The area near the main street gate could be used for more vendors instead of parking. More food variety.
With no charge could attend and enjoy the event.