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## Mountain Madness Airshow: 2014

Brian Battaglia  
*The University of Montana-Missoula*

Megan Schultz  
*The University of Montana-Missoula*

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# **Mountain Madness Airshow 2014**

Kalispell, 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](http://www.itrr.umt.edu)

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## Abstract

This study was conducted for the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce, to provide insight into the characteristics of attendees of the 2014 Mountain Madness Airshow event. Paper surveys were completed by 203 attendees of the event. Results show that 94% of respondents were residents of Montana and of those Montana residents, 80% were from Flathead County. Out-of-county respondents spent an average of three nights in Flathead County. More people spent money on restaurant/bar and gas purchases while visiting the area than any other spending category. Restaurant/bar purchases received the highest total dollars spent during the event. Respondents to the survey reported a total spending of \$5,525.00 in the Flathead County area. Results provide event organizers and the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce 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 Mountain Madness Airshow event attracted out-of-county Montana residents (14%) and out-of-state (6%) visitors to the Flathead County area. The attendees of the event make important economic contributions to the Flathead County area. The results of the study are worth considering for future planning of the Mountain Madness Airshow event.

- 52% of visitors who reside outside of Flathead County spent at least one night away from home. The mean number of nights spent in Flathead County was 3.44.
- More money was spent by these out-of-county visitors in restaurant/bar (\$1,374.00), gas (\$944.00), and groceries/snacks (\$909.00) than other spending categories. 87% of respondents reported that they were spending for a travel group size of at least two or more people (including respondent).
- 55% of respondents reported staying in the home of a friend or relative, followed by 20% staying in a hotel/motel/b&b.
- Attendees were mostly travelling with immediate family (31%) or with family and friends (23%). The average travel group size was 3 people (travel group spending size).
- Respondents traveled with a variety of age categories in their group – the highest percentages were 45-54 years old (32%), 55-64 years old (28%), and 35-44 years old (28%).
- Attendees heard about the event mostly from the radio (44%), word of mouth (37%), and the newspaper (37%).
- Overall, attendees of the event were satisfied with Mountain Madness Airshow, and 74% of respondents indicated that they would attend the event next year.

## Management Implications

Survey results indicate that Mountain Madness Airshow visitors are travelling from outside of the county to attend the event. This event brings both resident and nonresident visitors to the Flathead County area, and the attendees of the event make a variety of monetary contributions while visiting.

A large majority of people who attended Mountain Madness Airshow were residents of Montana, with 80% residing in Flathead 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 Flathead 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, cost, parking, and other aspects of the event. Changes based on this input could help bring back repeat visitors to Flathead County in the future.

## Introduction

The 2014 Mountain Madness Airshow event was hosted in Kalispell, Montana over two days from August 30<sup>th</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014. The Mountain Madness Airshow features hour long flight performances by the Thunderbirds. The Thunderbirds are comprised of airmen from the United States Air Force, and are known as “America’s Ambassadors in Blue.” The squadron performs around the world and the airmen demonstrate the Air Force’s expertise in air flight shows.

This event is organized by the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce (Convention and Visitor Bureau), a Montana non-profit corporation run by the business community and volunteers. The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce works to improve the business environment for the Kalispell and Flathead area community. Kalispell’s chamber has been around since 1904 and is committed to strengthening the economic opportunities for the greater Kalispell area.

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the 2014 Mountain Madness Airshow event with an understanding of the characteristics of visitors to the event, visitor spending in Flathead 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 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 Mountain Madness Airshow study include the following:

- Data was collected by Kalispell area volunteers who received a short training from ITRR’s survey contact person on how to intercept people and how to obtain completed surveys.
- ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.
- Only 203 valid surveys were collected, a relatively small sample size.

## Results

Of the 203 valid respondents, 94 percent (191 people) were from Montana and 6 percent (12 people) were from out-of-state or Canada (see Tables 1 and 2). Of all Montana respondents, 80 percent (162 people) were from Flathead County while 14 percent (29 people) were from other Montana counties.

**Table 1: Residence of all Respondents**

Place of Residence	# of total	% of total
Flathead County	162	80%
Other MT County	29	14%
Montana=191		
U.S. State	8	4%
Canada	1	>1%
Non-Montana Unspecified	3	<1%
Total all Residences	203	100%

**Table 2: Out-of-State and Canadian Residences**

Residence	# of respondents
Alaska	1
Alberta	1
Colorado	1
Idaho	1
Non-Montana Unspecified	3
Utah	2
Washington	2
Washington, DC	1

The mean age of respondents was 44 years old. Of those who were from outside Flathead County and responded to the survey, 22 people reported that they spent at least one night away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents (24 percent) spent two nights in Montana. The mean number of nights spent in Flathead County was 3.44 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 event attendees who reside outside of Flathead County. 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 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 non-resident respondents (those who reside outside of Flathead 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 \$5,525.00.

**Table 3 – Expenditure Data: Expenditures calculated using only non-residents (those who live outside of Flathead 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	\$98.14 (n=14)	7%	\$1,374.00
Gas	\$78.67 (n=12)	6%	\$944.00
Groceries/snacks	\$90.87 (n=10)	5%	\$909.00
Auto rental	\$300.00 (n=3)	2%	\$900.00
Hotel/motel/b&b	\$175.00 (n=4)	2%	\$700.00
Entertainment/recreation	\$95.00 (n=5)	3%	\$475.00
Campground	\$38.33 (n=3)	2%	\$115.00
Retail goods	\$27.00 (n=4)	3%	\$108.00
Local transportation	\$0.00 (n=1)	0%	\$0.00
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,525</b>

## Appendix A- Results

**Q1. Are you a resident of Montana? n=203**

94% Yes      6% No (skip to Q3.)

**Q2. Do you reside in Flathead County? n=191**

85% Yes (skip to Q11. on back)      15% 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 Kalispell or the Flathead Valley area? n=41**

15% Yes      85% No

**Q5. Was attending this event your primary reason for being in the area? n=42**

74% Yes      26% No

**Q6. For what other reasons are you visiting the area? (Check all that apply.) n=35**

7% Vacation/recreation/pleasure      4% Just passing through      1% Business/convention/meeting  
5% Visiting friends/relatives      3% Shopping

**Q7. For this event, how many nights did you spend away from home? n=38, Mean=3.05**

42% 0 (skip to Q.11)    5% 1      16% 3      3% 5      0% 7      3% 9  
24% 2      0% 4      3% 6      0% 8      5% 10 or more

**Q8. How many of those nights were in Montana? n=27, Mean=4.56**

19% 0      19% 2      7% 4      4% 6      0% 8      15% 10 or more  
11% 1      19% 3      4% 5      0% 7      4% 9

**Q9. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in Kalispell? n=27, Mean=3.44**

48% 0 nights    19% 2 nights    4% 4 nights    4% 6 nights    0% 8 nights    11% 10 or more  
4% 1 night    8% 3 nights    0% 5 nights    0% 7 nights    4% 9 nights

**Q10. In what type of accommodation(s) did you stay in Kalispell? (Check all that apply.) n=20**

20% Hotel/motel/B&B      0% Private campground      0% Resort/condominium  
10% Rental cabin/home      55% Home of friend/relative      0% Guest ranch  
5% Public land camping      5% Second home/cabin/condo      5% 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 Kalispell/Flathead 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 Kalispell area**

Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast

Campground

**FOOD in Kalispell area**

Restaurant/bar

Groceries/snacks

**TRANSPORTATION in Kalispell area**

Gasoline/diesel

Local transportation

Auto rental

**RETAIL/SERVICES in Kalispell area**

Retail goods

Entertainment/recreation

**Q12. How many people does the above spending represent (including yourself, i.e., your travel group size)? n=31**

13% 1	13% 3	10% 5	0% 7	0% 9	0% more than 10
32% 2	29% 4	3% 6	0% 8	0% 10	

**Q13. What option best describes the group with whom you attended this event? n=200**

7% Self	31% Immediate family	23% Family/friends	3% Business associates
15% Couple	7% Extended family	10% Friends	7% Organized group/club

**Q14. Please select all the ages represented in your group: n=194 for each age category**

19% 0-5 yrs.	13% 11-17 yrs.	25% 25-34 yrs.	32% 45-54 yrs.	13% 65-74 yrs.
18% 6-10 yrs.	24% 18-24 yrs.	28% 35-44 yrs.	28% 55-64 yrs.	4% 75 and over

**Q15. What best describes your annual household income? (In US dollars) n=123**

15% Less than \$20,000	17% \$60,000 to \$79,999	2% \$150,000 to \$199,999
21% \$20,000 to \$39,999	13% \$80,000 to \$99,999	3% \$200,000 and over
26% \$40,000 to \$59,999	4% \$100,000 to \$149,999	

**Q16. How long before this event did you make plans to attend? n=201**

11% The day of the event	33% 1-4 weeks before the event	8% Over 6 months before the event
25% 1-7 days before the event	23% 1-6 months before the event	



**Q17. How did you hear about the Mountain Madness Airshow? (Check all that apply.) n=197 per selection**

37% Word of mouth      9% Posters      9% Group or club      <1% Retail Outlet  
 37% Newspaper      8% Billboard      6% Flyer      3% Other Website  
 44% Radio      2% Magazine      3% Event website  
 32% Television      1% E-mail from event planners      5% Social Media

**Q18. Please rate your satisfaction with the Mountain Madness Airshow:**

Satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Mean	Total respondents
Organization of the event	3%	3%	11%	54%	27%	3%	4.08	n=183
Event staff	3%	0%	12%	53%	30%	3%	4.15	n=185
Cost of the event	7%	6%	17%	49%	17%	5%	3.78	n=183
Location of the event	3%	0%	11%	54%	29%	3%	4.15	n=184
Concessions available	1%	3%	13%	52%	26%	6%	4.15	n=181
Number of people at the event	1%	0%	13%	60%	22%	5%	4.15	n=177
Parking	10%	11%	18%	41%	19%	3%	3.56	n=187
Sound system(ability to hear)	4%	2%	16%	54%	19%	6%	3.99	n=176
Variety of activities	3%	0%	14%	57%	22%	4%	4.07	n=177
Signage/directions	10%	6%	13%	48%	21%	3%	3.74	n=182
Cleanliness	2%	0%	10%	58%	27%	3%	4.16	n=183
Availability of restrooms	4%	<1%	10%	54%	29%	3%	4.13	n=186

**Q19. What is your age? Range=18-78, Mean=43.73**

**Q20. What is your gender? n=197**

40% Male      60% Female

**Q21. When might you come to the Mountain Madness Air Show again?**

74% Next Year      26% Within 5 Years      0% Never

**Q22. Please tell us what you liked about the Mountain Madness Airshow in Kalispell, Montana.**

See Appendix B

**Q23. Please tell us what you did not like about the Mountain Madness Airshow in Kalispell, Montana.**

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 the Mountain Madness Airshow in Kalispell, Montana.**

Activities for kids.
Air Demos.
Airplane display.
Anything flying.
Arial acrobatics.
Atmosphere and events.
Being with the community.
Bouncy house.
Bravery in the air.
Easy access and being local.
Enjoy seeing jets and planes.
Everything but parking.
Everything.
Flew in.
Food.
Great family event.
Great family event.
Gyros.
Have not seen it yet.
Helicopter.
It was fun and the kids loved it.
Jets.
Kettle arm.
Kid's zone and air show.
Kids' activities.
Kids area seating.
Kids play area.
Love it so far.
Love it, child of a fighter pilot (Vietnam era).
Loved it.
Nice layout and the planes.
Nice show.
Nope, grateful for all of the advertising.
Old planes.
Organized for traffic.
Organized.
Organized.
Plane events.
Planes.
Planes.
Planes.
Planes.

Planes.
Planes.
Planes.
Planes.
Planes.
Planes.
Planes.
Security.
Shuttle bus.
T-birds.
The performers.
The setting, the sky divers, the music. Would love more music.
The show.
The shows.
The thunderbirds.
The thunderbirds and acts.
The weather and the planes.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds show.
Thunderbirds, kids liked the bounce houses
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Thunderbirds.
Tight security.
Variety of shows.
Variety of things for everyone.
Very well organized.
Volunteer.
Weather.
Well organized and planned out.

**Q23. Please tell us what you did not like about the Mountain Madness Airshow in Kalispell, Montana.**

A lot of walking.
A/C. Too expensive to park A/C.
ATM location.

Beer.
Clouds
Cold.
Cost and food cost.
Cost of drinks for the family.
Cost of jumpy houses.
Cost of stuff.
Cost, but \$10.00 to park a plane is too expensive.
Drink prices and people smoking in no smoking areas.
Flights.
Food is expensive.
Hard to be here with kids.
Kid's park.
Lack of schedule, long walk from parking, costs of concession, and alternatives for bad weather.
Long walk from parking.
Long walk from parking.
Long way from check in.
Lower kids prices.
Needed a ride to the gate.
No directions on the highway indicating parking, just a lot of cones. Would have been nice to have signage.
No F-14 Tomcat.
No signs and parking was bad.
Not sure where we could sit and who the chairs are for.
Parking.
Parking and cost of tickets.
Parking and walking.
Parking facility.
Parking so far away.
Parking so far away.
Parking was too far away.
Parking.
Parking.
Parking.
Parking.
Parking.
Parking.
People smoking in non-smoking areas.
Price of tickets and food.
Price.
Price.
Pricey food.
Rain.
Rain.
Seating empty, everyone outside the air show should have seating for the same price.
Stagger/elevate the seats in the box area like a movie theater, it was too hard to see.
Standing in line per pay.

The cost of everything is absolutely outrageous.
The cost of food and drinks is highway robbery.
The price.
The rain.
The rain.
The weather.
The weather.
Too expensive.
Took too long to start.
Volunteer.
Walking a lot, everything was spread out too far.
Walking distance.
Weather
Weather.
Weather.
White tents.
White tents in front of the rest of people.
White tents need to move so people can see more of the show.
Wind.

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

Another weekend other than labor day.
Be realistic and stop charging four dollars for a soda and two dollars for a bag of chips.
Better access to parking.
Better parking.
Better parking.
Better parking and cheaper vendors.
Better signage on the highway.
Bring back the cargo plane.
Cheaper drinks and better information on smoking areas.
Closer parking to the event.
Coffee.
Coffee.
Cost and parking
Cover.
Detailed schedule of daily events.
Find better prices. There is no need to charge someone fifty dollars to get a couple of snacks and a drink.
Have them every year.
Inform parking people and the shuttle.
Less expensive for kids' activities.
Less inexpensive.
Lower prices.
Lower prices.

Make sure the weather is better.
More activities, static planes. Was not much to look at or do in between the flying?
More cover.
More handicapped trams.
More military 4/C, C5, C17, 410.
More music, more lively.
More seats.
More transportation.
Nothing. The organization was impressive.
Parking.
Parking and signs.
Parking and white tents
Parking too far out.
Parking, came through the farmer's field.
Parking.
Same price to all with seating available.
Signs for parking and general improvement of parking.
Someone to carry stuff for him.
The website was not accurate. Allow bottled water to be brought in.
There were closer entrances for parking so the walk would not have been so long, we came in the Kalispell entrance.
Umbrella stand.