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Montana Winter Fair- 2016

Lewistown, Montana

Megan Tanner Schultz, M.S.

A random sample of attendees completed a questionnaire about the 71st Montana Winter Fair.

Montana Winter Fair - 2016

Lewistown, Montana

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Case Study Report 2016-3

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Abstract

This study was conducted for the Montana Winter Fair to provide insight into the characteristics of attendees to the event that has been celebrating agriculture since 1946. Paper surveys were completed by 233 attendees of the event. Results show that 96% of attendees were residents of Montana and of those 19% came from outside of Fergus County. Visitors from outside of Lewistown spent an average of less than two nights in the city. More people spent money on groceries/snacks, hotel/motel, restaurant/bar, and retail goods while visiting the area than other spending categories. Respondents to the survey reported total spending of \$18,777 in Lewistown. Results provide event organizers with the Montana Winter Fair and Central Montana Tourism Region 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

Just less than half of the attendees at the Montana Winter Fair were visiting from outside of Lewistown. These visitors make important economic contributions to the community. The results of the study are worth considering for future planning of the Montana Winter Fair.

- 10% of attendees from outside of Lewistown were first time visitors to the area.
- 37% of attendees reported this as their first time attending the event.
- 64% of attendees selected the Montana Winter Fair as their primary reason for being in the area.
- More money was spent by respondents in groceries/snacks (\$4,238), hotel/motel/b&b/rental cabin or home (\$4,207), restaurant/bar (\$3,711) and retail goods (\$3,190) than any other spending categories as reported by non-locals (those residing outside of Lewistown).
- 74% of overnight-respondents reported staying in hotel/motel, followed by 24% at the home of a friend or relative.
- Attendees were mostly travelling as a couple (31%) or with immediate family (21%). The average travel group size was 2.21 people (average number of people represented in a spending group).
- The highest percentages of age categories for attendees were 55-64 year olds (32.3%), 65-74 years old (25.5%), 45-54 year olds (24.5%), 35-44 year olds (21.8%), and 25-34 year olds (20.9%).
- 32% indicated that they planned to attend the event just 1-7 days prior to the event followed by 30% planning 1-4 weeks before the Montana Winter Fair.
- Attendees heard about the event mostly from word of mouth (54%), newspaper (51%), radio (36%), posters (24%), TV (14%), or group or club (12%).
- High levels of satisfaction with many aspects of the event were reported including: cost of the event with a mean of 4.49 out of 5, event staff with a mean of 4.47, locations of the event with a mean of 4.44, cleanliness with a mean of 4.42, and availability of advanced information with a mean of 4.40 out of 5.
- 90% of attendees indicated they would attend the event next year with an additional 10% saying they would return to the event within 5 years.

Management Implications

Event attendees are traveling from other areas of Fergus County, other parts of Montana, and some other states to attend the 71st Montana Winter Fair. This event brings both locals and visitors to Lewistown and the attendees of the event make a variety of monetary contributions while visiting.

Organizers should focus on many things they are already doing well, reflected by the high levels of satisfaction with many aspects of the event. In addition, it is recommended that the organizers review the respondents' comments from Appendix B to gain insight into people's likes and dislikes of the event. Changes based on this input could help in bringing back attendees to this event and Lewistown/Central Montana in the future.

Introduction

The Montana Winter Fair was hosted in Lewistown, Montana over two weekends: January 27-31st and February 5-7th. This was the 71st time this event has been held. The event has been celebrating agriculture since 1946!

The purpose of this study was to provide the organizers of the 71st Montana Winter Fair an understanding of attendees at the event, their spending patterns in Lewistown, levels of satisfaction with different aspects of the event, as well as other information for the event organizers.

Methods

Data was collected by asking attendees to complete the questionnaire on-site. 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 this event include the following:

- Data was collected by board members and/or staff of the Montana Winter Fair. These individuals were given information from ITRR on best practices for data collection including how to intercept people and obtain completed surveys.
- ITRR personnel were not present during the data collection for quality control.
- The total amount of surveys completed was a low sample size.

Results

Of the 233 valid responses, 96% are Montana residents (224 people) with most of those residing in Fergus County (180 people). See Tables 1 and 2 for a breakdown of residence. Of those who do not reside in Lewistown, 59 percent (68 people) reported that the Montana Winter Fair was their primary reason for being in the area.

This event attracted many to the area who did other things while they were here: vacation/recreation/pleasure (10 people); visit friends/relatives (13 people); business (24 people); and shopping (14 people). Most attendees did not stay overnight in Lewistown; however, of those who did, a variety of lodging accommodations was used: hotel/motel/b&b/rental cabin or home (25 travel groups) followed by home of friend or relative (8 groups). The marketing done for the event was widespread and attendees heard of the event in many places: word of mouth (119 people), newspaper (112 people), radio (80 people), posters/flyers (54 people), TV (31 people) as well as many other outlets.

Table 1: Residence of all Respondents

Place of Residence	# of total	% of total
Lewistown Resident	117	50%
Fergus County (outside of Lewistown)	59	25%
Other Montana County	48	21%
Total Montana =	224	
Out of State	9	4%
Total all Residences	233	100%

Table 2: Out-of-State Respondents

U.S. Residence	# of respondents
Arizona	1
Nebraska	1
North Dakota	4
Utah	1
Out-of-state Unspecified	2
Total	9

The mean age of respondents was 55 years old. Of those who were from outside of Lewistown and responded to the survey, 28 percent reported that they spent at least one night away from home. Of those nights spent away from home, the greatest percent of respondents spent two nights in Montana. The average number of nights in Lewistown was 1.87 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 the city of Lewistown, 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 Lewistown in the following categories: accommodations (hotel/motel/bed & breakfast/rental cabin/home), campground, overnight livestock accommodations, food (restaurant/bar and groceries/snacks), transportation (gasoline/diesel, auto rental), and retail/services (retail goods and entertainment/recreation).

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 \$18,777.

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>
Groceries/snacks	\$184.26 (n=23)	20%	\$4,238
Hotel/motel/B&B/rental cabin/home	\$182.91 (n=23)	20%	\$4,207
Restaurant/bar	\$82.47 (n=45)	39%	\$3,711
Retail goods	\$199.38 (n=16)	14%	\$3,190
Gasoline/diesel	\$69.75 (n=36)	31%	\$2,511
Entertainment/recreation	\$79.09 (n=11)	9%	\$870
Local transportation	\$50.00 (n=1)	<1%	\$50
Campground	\$0.00 (n=0)	0%	\$0
Overnight livestock accommodations	\$0.00 (n=0)	0%	\$0
Auto rental	\$0.00 (n=0)	0%	\$0
TOTAL			\$18,777

Appendix A- Results

Q1. Are you a resident of Montana? n=233

96% Yes 4% No (skip to Q4.)

Q2. Do you reside in Fergus County? n=223

81% Yes (go to Q3) 19% No (skip to Q5.)

Q3. Do you reside in Lewistown? n=176

67% Yes (skip to Q15. on back) 34% 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 Lewistown and Central Montana? n=107

10% Yes 90% No

Q6. Have you attended the Montana Winter Fair in previous years? n=109

63% Yes 37% No

Q7. Was attending this event your primary reason for being in the area? n=107

64% Yes 36% No

Q8. For what other reasons are you visiting the area? (Check all that apply.) n=55

4% Vacation/recreation/pleasure 1% Just passing through 10% Business/convention/meeting

6% Visiting friends/relatives 6% Shopping

Q9. For the Montana Winter Fair, how many nights did you spend away from home? n=98, mean=0.68

66% 0 (skip to Q.13) 10% 1 3% 3 0% 5 0% 7 0% 9
19% 2 0% 4 0% 6 0% 8 1% 10 or more

Q10. How many of those nights were in Montana? n=33, mean=1.97

0% 0 58% 2 0% 4 0% 6 0% 8 3% 10 or more
33% 1 6% 3 0% 5 0% 7 0% 9

Q11. Of your nights in Montana, how many did you stay in Lewistown? n=33, mean=1.88

3% 0 58% 2 0% 4 0% 6 0% 8 3% 10 or more
33% 1 3% 3 0% 5 0% 7 0% 9

Q12. In what type of accommodation(s) did you stay in Lewistown? (Check all that apply.) n=34

74% Hotel/motel/B&B 24% Home of friend/relative
0% Rental cabin/home 3% Second home/cabin/condo
0% Private campground 0% Guest ranch

See table 3 for Expenditures

Q.13 Please enter your best estimate of the TOTAL amount of money in US dollars you (and your family/travel group, if applicable) spent in Lewistown in each of the following categories.

If you did not spend money in a category, please leave it blank.

ACCOMMODATIONS in Lewistown

Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast

\$

Campground

\$

Overnight livestock accommodations

\$

FOOD in Lewistown

Restaurant/bar

\$

Groceries/snacks

\$

TRANSPORTATION in Lewistown

Gasoline/diesel

\$

Local transportation

\$

Auto rental

\$

RETAIL/SERVICES in Lewistown Retail goods

\$

Entertainment/recreation

\$

Q14. How many people does the above spending represent (including yourself, i.e., your travel group size)? n=52; mean = 2.21

25% 1	12% 3	0% 5	0% 7	0% 9	0% more than 10
54% 2	6% 4	2% 6	0% 8	2% 10	

Q15. What option best describes the group with whom you attended this event? n=219

16% Self	21% Immediate family	16% Family/friends	3% Business associates
31% Couple	1% Extended family	8% Friends	4% Organized group/club

Q16. Please select all the ages represented in your group: n=220 for each age category

9% 0-5 yrs.	7% 11-17 yrs.	21% 25-34 yrs.	25% 45-54 yrs.	26% 65-74 yrs.
11% 6-10 yrs.	8% 18-24 yrs.	22% 35-44 yrs.	32% 55-64 yrs.	13% 75 and over

Q17. How long before the Montana Winter Fair did you make plans to attend? n=208

13% The day of the event	30% 1-4 weeks before the event	9% Over 6 months before the event
32% 1-7 days before the event	16% 1-6 months before the event	

Q18. How did you hear about the 71st Montana Winter Fair? (Check all that apply.) n=221 per selection

54% Word of Mouth	24% Posters//flyers	6% E-mail from event planners	9% Event website
51% Newspaper	7% Magazine	12% Group or club	9% Social media
36% Radio	10% Direct mail/premium book	1% Retail outlet	3% Other website
14% Television			

Q19. Please rate your satisfaction with this year's Montana Winter Fair:

Satisfaction	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Mean	Total respondents
Organization of the event	4%	0%	4%	40%	53%	4.38	n=188
Event staff	3%	0%	3%	34%	60%	4.47	n=180
Cost of the event	4%	0%	3%	31%	62%	4.49	n=170
Locations of the event	3%	1%	5%	32%	59%	4.44	n=179
Event website	1%	1%	14%	38%	47%	4.29	n=111
Concessions available	2%	4%	11%	34%	49%	4.23	n=149
Availability of advance information	2%	1%	4%	40%	53%	4.40	n=158
Number of people at the event	3%	2%	5%	42%	48%	4.30	n=167
Parking	3%	3%	14%	36%	44%	4.14	n=174
Sound systems	5%	3%	12%	40%	40%	4.05	n=152
Variety of activities	2%	1%	7%	43%	47%	4.32	n=166
Signage/directions	3%	3%	11%	41%	43%	4.20	n=159
Cleanliness	2%	0%	4%	41%	53%	4.42	n=173
Availability of restrooms	2%	1%	6%	41%	50%	4.34	n=177

*N/A responses were re-coded to be a missing response for the most accurate mean score.

Q20. What is your age? n=205
Range=18-88, mean=55.13

Q21. What is your gender? n=219
44% Male 56% Female

Q22. When might you come to the Montana Winter Fair again? n=212
90% Next Year 10% Within 5 Years 0% Never

Q23. Please tell us what you liked about the 71st Montana Winter Fair.

See Appendix B

Q24. Please tell us what you did not like about the 71st Montana Winter Fair.

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 71st Montana Winter Fair.

All of it. Polar plunge and exhibits
All the different activities
Animals
Art Center- work shop and quilt show. Variety of activities
Attended Eagles Wednesday Event
Attended farm forum only
Bouncy house
Break from winter
Clinic and ranch sorting
Cooler horsemanship
Dog show
Enjoyed most
Events for all ages and interests. Events relevant- really relevant MT lifestyle. Nice venues for events. Prize money for competitions! Good advertising. Very friendly events.
Everyone was friendly, my daughter and I enjoyed it a lot!
Everyone was friendly. Weather was great.
Everyone was very friendly and there was something for everyone
Everything
Everything
Everything
Everything-especially dog show
Exhibits
Farm forum
Farm forum
Fiddle contest
Fiddle contest
Fiddlers were great!
Fiddling... chili and cinnamon rolls
First time coming and we like it in general, great idea
Folks coming in for competition from all over and the re-creations exhibit
Friday night concert, fiddle contest, Old McDonald's barn
Friendliness of everyone
Friendly people
Friendly staff. Trade center location. Publicity.
Friendly, a lot to look at
Good event- nice weather
Good forum
Good hockey tourny
Good morning Montana, quilts at the Art Center, dogs, rabbits
Great farm forum about a current topic
Great people and dogs
Great speaker at farm forum

Helped my sister with the re-creations show. Loved it. Had so much fun. Wonderful people, both shoppers and event planners.
Hockey
Hockey
Hockey
Hockey
Hockey
Hockey
Hockey tournament
Hockey tournament
Hockey, hockey, hockey!
Horse and barn events. Cook-offs
Horse stuff, crafts, dog show
Horsemanship class with James Cooler
I always wanted to come to this seminar. Very happy to have it so close.
I enjoy booths and the pine derby and just socializing
Is getting better each year. I have attended since it started here.
It being in Lewistown
It had plenty to do
It was wonderful. Everyone was so friendly and the community was very supportive! I will come back again!
Kids events, animal barn, stick horse rodeo, team sorting
Kids, food, events
Knew nothing about it until Red Lodge invite to play hockey
Kohler
Liked the horsemanship clinic for a reasonable cost
Location
Lots of variety. Fiddle contest. Quilts- dutch oven cooking. All the booths in the Trade Center.
Loved the recreations
New events
Nice having it all in the trade center instead of Yogo
Nice increase in people
Only went to succession planning meeting at Eagles clubs. Enjoyed it very much
Options of clinics
Overall very nice
Overall was real nice
Pancake breakfast with fiddling contest!
People
Photography, fiddles
Picture opportunities
Quilts, cupcakes, hockey. Recycled furniture and wears.
Rabbit agility and Ranch sorting
Really enjoyed Kevin's farm forum
Small and easy to get around. I love the small, friendly environment
Sorting clinic
Stick horse rodeo
Stick rodeo, dog show
Succession planning
Succession planning

Succession planning
Succession planning
Succession planning conference well organized
That you take the time to put it on. Thanks!
The chili cook-off and cinnamon roll
The farm workshop
The people
The variety of events! The dog show!
The variety of exhibits and booths
The weather was perfect!
The Winter Fair Open Air hockey tournament is a blast. Let's make it a tradition.
The workshop with Kevin Spafford
Trade center seemed to be better attended by vendors.
Trade show and agriculture
Unique activities rep. ag lifestyle
Variety of activities and displays
Variety of activities. Free farm forum
Variety of attractions, events
Variety of events to attend
Variety of events. Professional horsemanship
Very good
We come for the fiddle contest. Vicki does a superb job
Well organized
With succession planning workshop

Q24. Please tell us what you did not like about the 71st Montana Winter Fair.

A little warm for the ice
Cold
Cold room
Couldn't understand clinician
Did not attend
Got lost in Lewistown- no signs- web says at Trade Center not Fairgrounds!
I did not go to the night show because the boozers stood and walked in front of us so I couldn't see. I was in the 2nd row. Booze should be in the back.
Is this the fair??
Mud and cold winds. Nothing you could do about that.
Mud, parking
N/A
N/A
Need more horse events besides stick horse rodeo and team sorting.
No list of vendors previous to fair
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing

Nothing wrong
Nothing yet
Parking at Fairgrounds
Parking downtown
Parking was a muddy mess
Parking, long surveys
Photo show was not done well. Cubical does not do it! In years past it has been displayed very well and fun to see.
Poor sound system in pavillion
Sound system at Eagles isn't good
Sound system at Eagles. Could not hear the announcer at the fiddler competition.
Split venue: downtown and fairgrounds. Needs to be centralized
Stick horse rodeo was too long!
The concession at Trade Co on Saturday was undermanned- too long a wayt
The mud but not much you can do about that
This was the first event
Too many events in rodeo
Trade Center food lines were long and food was good but took too long for orders
We attended the natural horsemanship clinic. It was very difficult to understand the clinician. Portable speakers in front of the bleachers would have helped the sound.
Will do Sunday
Zero

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

A list of vendors
Better organize Polar Plunge registration
Better sound for horse clinic
Better sound system
Boards at entryways to pavilion to not step in mud holes
Centralize events a little more
Cheerleaders
Create a downtown parking lot
East end ice soft
Good
Have registration for events/plunge/stick horse in separate area, not doorway
It will get better because great people are running this event.
Map of town showing where each venue is located
Maps! Doesn't matter whether on paper or on a board at the entrance. Also, a billboard with events and times.
Maybe a panel of people who have made a successful transition and how they did it.
Might need parking help
More events downtown
More events!
More hockey
More hockey
More horse stuff

More info in Billings early
More parking and better backfields
More parking for trailers
More people
More recognition for sponsors- they're great!
More young fiddlers
N/A
Need more activities
Need more things to do.
Need to get more exhibitors. Utilize under grandstands.
Nice to see it growing. Went all the time when in Boz.
Night show would be nice at H.S.
None
None
Not sure yet
Only 1 or 2 events
Potential better sound systems for clarity. Hard to understand sometimes
Separate the breakfast and the fiddlers- the people at the tables talked during the performance, non-stop. Very rude for performers. Eagles needs improved sound system- difficult to hear the emcee introducing contestants especially with people talking.
Skijoring. More hockey and curling!
Sound system
Take care so you can do it again next year!
The chili at the Eagles should have how spicy each is. I like spicy and tried 2 of them- hardly no spice at all.
Three 17 minute periods versus two 25 min.
Unknown when return to event
Would be nice to have all the events at the same location- at fairgrounds
Would have liked a map of locations, especially fairgrounds
You improve every year with more events.