

A Festive Region; A Festive Bounty!

An Overview of the Economic Impact of Festivals
and Events in the Windsor-Essex Region

CANADA  SOUTH
FESTIVAL NETWORK

By Frazier Fathers



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I. Message from the Executive Director: Rita Ossington

Windsor and Essex County can be proud of their place in the festival industry. We see an increasing number of quality events taking place in our region. We can boast having 11 festivals named to the “Top 100 Festivals and Events in Ontario,” a number receiving accolades for advertising and promotion campaigns, contributions provided by volunteers and a “Festival City Designation” for a community under 200,000, from Festivals and Events Ontario. More and more of our weekends are spent enjoying visiting annual festivals year round.

We have become tourists in our own back yard, a festival destination. Our festivals are becoming decision makers for new residents and the number of visitors we see attending from outside the region is increasing. However, how do we prove it?

The Canada South Festival Network has been collecting data for our member festivals for 15 years. This data was done primarily for the individual festival organizers and those whose events fall within the qualifying dates of the Annual Survey Program. They receive the results of the data collection in a report annually. The reports on the most part have been for the personal use of those organizations. They help formulate marketing plans, planning entertainment and sponsorship packages etc. When we saw the increase in the number of granting opportunities we saw a greater need and demand placed on the organizers for third party statistic that could substantiate the requirements of these grant proposals.

The surveys provide the organizers with the necessary raw data that helps explain the impact of their festival to their community. But that is no longer enough. We needed to get a better idea of what the Festival Industry means to our region. There is a need for a benchmark. How do you know you’ve made it if there are no measures or starting point ROI is hard to substantiate? The festival industry has a number of challenges when it comes to this. This report being presented is the first scan of the industry in our area and draws attention to these challenges, while giving us current data that paints a picture of the Festival Bounty we enjoy in the Windsor Essex Region.



Fireworks on the Detroit River

II. Executive Summary

Founded in 1999, Canada South Festival Network (CSFN) was mandated with promoting the Windsor-Essex region as a year-round “Festival Tourist Destination”, supporting existing festivals and events and assisting with the development of new festivals and events.

As a part of this mandate, CSFN has sent Survey Teams to member organization’s festivals to collect socio-demographic information and feedback for festival organizers. It is from this data collection that this report has emerged. Using the last 6 years’ worth of valid survey data this report provides an overview of the impact of festivals and events on the Windsor-Essex region.

Based on the data collected, CSFN estimates that the annual economic impact of festival and event tourists in Windsor-Essex is in the \$5-6 million range annually, with somewhere between \$200,000 and \$800,000 entering the local economy from outside tourists travelling to the region and attending festivals. Beyond this economic impact, this study also shows that a clear majority of attendees are local residences from the Windsor-Essex area, that festivals and events attract individuals of all ages, demographics and socio-economic classes, and that the newspaper, word of mouth and radio are the most important means of attracting people to festivals.

What can be concluded from this report is that, not only do festivals and events in Windsor-Essex have a tangible economic impact on the region, they also provide a substantial boost to the reputation and quality of life not only in the region, but also beyond as out-of-town tourists who attend festivals and events go home and tell their friends, co-workers and colleagues of the good things happening in Windsor-Essex.



Crowd in front the stage at Carrousel By the River in Windsor’s Festival Plaza.

III. Introduction

Founded in 1999, Canada South Festival Network (CSFN) is a membership supported not-for-profit organization that is charged with providing assistance to local festivals and events in the Windsor-Essex region. The organization is mandated to encourage, support and facilitate the festival and event industry within the region while being a centralized voice for the Windsor-Essex festival tourism industry by producing measurable statistics on the regional economic impact of festivals and events.



The Summer Fest Midway in the Windsor Festival Plaza

As a part of this mandate, member festivals and events receive two major services from CSFN. First, they receive access to a wide variety of material support and exclusive resources that are provided by CSFN. Most importantly the member festivals and events are included in the annual *Explore Windsor Essex Festival and Events Guide*. This guide provides vital information about the member organizations' festivals and events occurring throughout the year and is distributed to community organizations, information kiosks and event organizers across the region and beyond.

The second major benefit for member organizations is the ability to request the CSFN Survey Team to attend their festival or event and collect feedback as well as economic and demographic data from the attendees. This data collection allows for feedback to be gathered from the festival's attendees on their preferences and opinions on the event while data can be used to form the basis of future grant writing, attract sponsors or vendors to help the festival grow and help build the event's brand. It is from this data collection that this report has emerged. The goal of this report is to use the 6 years aggregate data to evaluate the economic impact of festivals and events in the Windsor-Essex area.

Over the 6 year span of this report, CSFN has been very successful in gathering information from festival attendees in Windsor-Essex. From the years 2009-2014, approximately 27,380 valid surveys were completed at 123 different festivals and events in the Windsor-Essex Region.¹ In total, CSFN and its members estimate that on average approximately 400,000-500,000 people attend the various festivals and events sites in the Windsor Essex region each year.²

¹ A full list of festivals attended by the survey team and the years of attendance can be found in Appendix 1.

² It should be noted that this number is an estimate of only those individuals who attend a specific festival site. For events that attract large scale viewing over a large area (e.g. Canada Day Parade or Summer Fest Fireworks) their event estimates only include the portion of the attendees within the festival areas not the entire attendance.

IV. Methodology of Data Collection and Analysis

a. Research Design

The data that is given to the member organizations is gathered by the CSFN Survey Team who attends the various festivals or events around the Windsor-Essex region. At the events the Survey Team ask attendees to complete a questionnaire that consist of 13 questions for all attendees with 8 additional questions specifically for out-of-town festival attendees who do not reside in the Windsor-Essex region. Please see Appendix 2 for a copy of the current survey that is used to collect the data.

The Survey Team uses the questionnaire to gather data at the event through two primary means: first a booth is set up in a high traffic area of the event and is manned by Survey Team members who attempt



CSFN Survey Team Booth set up in the Windsor Festival Plaza, summer 2014.

to attract passersby to complete questionnaires. The second method comes from team members canvassing the festival site and approaching individuals and groups and inquiring about their willingness to complete the survey and provide feedback on the event. Individuals have the choice of completing the survey themselves or having a Survey Team member record their responses.

Naturally there is a selection bias that accompanies this form of survey work

but the principal hope of CSFN is to capture as large of a sample of the festivals attendees as possible. As an incentive to attract festival attendees, each year CSFN is donated two round trip VIA Rail tickets that are good for travel in the Windsor-Quebec City Corridor. All survey participants that provide completed questionnaires with their full contact information are entered into a draw for these tickets.

Following completion of the event, the questionnaires are tabulated and the totals inputted into a database for each festival and event. From this initial dataset a report and presentation are compiled and given to the member organization and, should the organization wish, they can request a presentation of the findings. For festivals that have had an ongoing membership with CSFN and data collected over several years, comparisons are made between the most recent data and the previous year(s) data in order to help identify trends and a comparative context. The data that is provided to the festival organizers offers an effective snapshot of their event, providing economic and demographic information on attendees along with their feedback and suggestions for the future.

b. Research Challenges

Despite the best effort of the CSFN, several factors do hamper efforts to improve the rigor of the findings. The first of these factors emerge from the Survey Team itself. The Survey Team is made up of students who are hired under the Canada Summer Jobs Program³ and co-op students from the University of Windsor. Although these students are supported by CSFN staff, they largely operate independently while at the events under minimal supervision. This can result in some team members not being as efficient as possible with the collection of valid data. Although efforts to re-hire past students who excelled on the Survey Team are made on an annual basis, the fact that the Survey Team is only active from Mid-May to Labour Day means that turnover is high. As a result, the quality of the students who are a part of the Survey Team changes from year to year, which in turn impacts the data collection rates and the representativeness of the samples collected at each event.

A second challenge comes from the evolving nature of the survey and who it targets. Over the 6 years of this evaluation, the survey that has been used by CSFN has been modified on several occasions. These modifications include the reordering of questions, the merging of response categories, and the addition, removal or break up of questions. The changes were undertaken not only in an effort to provide the maximum amount of valuable information to member organizations, but also in an effort to keep the surveys as concise as possible and maximize the flow of questions to ensure high response rates.

Additionally the survey is designed and distributed only to festival and event attendees or tourists not merchants or vendors at the festival. CSFN recognizes that by not including vendors and merchants we are certainly missing out on important data. Although there are future plans to mitigate this challenge, the current data provides insight on the impact of the tourism side of festivals and events which is a primary mandate of CSFN.



Individuals completing the survey at Balloonapalooza. Note, performer was asked to hold survey but did not actually complete the survey.

A third major factor that impacts the data collection process is the weather. As most festivals and events occur in an outdoor setting, if the days that the Survey Team is present at the event have poor weather, the willingness of attendees to take the time to fill out a questionnaire is impacted. As a result, there have been cases where, due to poor weather, survey samples from events have been too small to reliably be an indicator of people's feelings towards the festival.

³ For more information on the Canada Summer Jobs Program please refer to the link: <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/programs/scpp.shtml>

A fourth challenge comes from the attendance estimates of festivals and events. Although many festival and events in the Windsor-Essex area are entry controlled, allowing for accurate attendance numbers to be gathered, other events like the Windsor Canada Day Parade or Summer Fest Carnival are ungated events. For these ungated events, estimates of attendance are used to represent the population of the survey samples. Unless accurate alternative measures of the event's attendance can be found, CSFN uses the attendance figures provided by the festival organizers as the basis of their sample population. CSFN estimates that on average the Survey Team reaches approximately 0.91% of all festival attendees per year. Although this average sample is small, the samples from the individual festivals range from 0.5% to 10% of attendees. The skewing of the attendance figures is a result of a handful of larger very successful festivals that last over longer periods of time and attract larger crowds (e.g. Summer Fest, Tecumseh Corn Festival).

Finally, CSFN does not prevent attendees who attend multiple festivals from completing the survey at each festival. Since each event is a different experience and is supported by different organizations (in



Tecumseh Corn Fest 2013

many cases) having feedback from the same individual can be valuable. Unfortunately, it has been observed by Survey Team members that after one member of a family completes a survey, other member(s) would approach the Survey Team and request to complete the survey to improve the odds of winning the VIA Rail tickets. Although efforts are made to prevent this double sampling due to multiple members of the Survey Team being engaged by festival and

event attendees, voluntary disclosure of personal information and hundreds of responses at an event can make it difficult to identify those responses that are made just for a chance to win the train tickets. The risk that accompanies this double sampling is that if an individual is participating in the survey for the express purpose of increasing their odds of winning the VIA Rail tickets, their responses could be collected multiple times which could skew an event's data sample; as an individual may complete the survey quickly with little thought to the questions or with inaccurate information.

As a means to mitigate these challenges this report uses an average of the valid survey data that has been collected over the 6 year period (2009-2014) as the basis for the analysis. A survey is considered valid under three criteria: if the respondent provides some form of identifying contact information (address, postal code or city), if the responses to the individual questions are deemed reasonable (i.e. response appears to be a *true* response), and if the responses are not blatant duplicates of another survey (identified by the handwriting of the respondent and comparative information). By using 6 years'

worth of data not only does this enable a longitudinal evaluation of festivals over a period of time, it helps mitigate the variation in the annual results due to the challenges outlined above.

Although this is a simplistic method, CSFN feels that it is appropriate for this initial evaluation of the broader impact of festivals and events in the Windsor-Essex area while helping mitigate the festival to festival and annual variation that occurs in attendance and spending. Although a more complex measure such as weighting festival expenditures based on proportion of attendance is possible and is a viable avenue for future research it is beyond the scope of this report.



Comber Fair 2013 Floral Display Prize Winner's Table

V. Summary of Results 2009-2014

Aside from the comment based feedback from the surveys, the questionnaires also enable festival organizers to review a range of demographic, marketing, and socio-economic data on their attendees. This section of the report breaks down aggregated versions of the data that have been collected from festivals and events over the last 6 years.

a. City of Residence

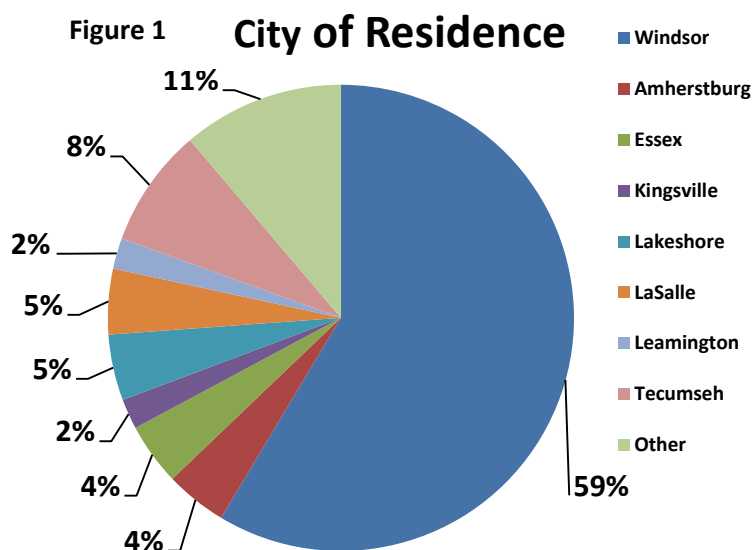
The city of residence is an important feature of survey data as it enables CSFN and its members to see where the attendees of their festivals come from. Naturally this data is important to organizers as the goals of many festivals are to attract outsiders to the Windsor-Essex region. What the data shows is that unsurprisingly a clear majority of respondents hail from Windsor. This finding is largely due to the

geography of the Windsor-Essex region and where festivals and events take place in the region. Windsor is by far the largest population centre in the region and as a result draws the largest percentage of the population. This larger population has a spillover effect on the small community festivals as there is a greater likelihood that an individual attendee from Windsor would travel to a festival in the county and be surveyed compared to a person from LaSalle or Kingsville traveling to Windsor and being surveyed.

The most significant piece of data from this chart is the 11% who identified themselves

as “Other”. This number is made up of 2,022 valid survey respondents, who identified themselves as not residing in the Windsor-Essex region. The primary source for out-of-town attendees to the festivals is Chatham-Kent; CSFN offers a breakdown of Chatham Kent respondents to its member organizations. Together, Ontario residents make up 92% of out-of-town festival attendees with 5% from Michigan, 2% from the rest of the United States or other countries and 1% coming from other provinces.

The primary takeaway from this data is that festivals and events are widely engaged by local communities as they occur and as a result should be considered a key part of maintaining and improving the quality of life and lifestyle in the Windsor-Essex region. These events are able to attract some out-of-town attendees with the numbers fluctuating depending on the nature, timing and weather that accompanies the festival



b. Socio-Economic and Demographic Data

The age, gender, party size and income level of festival attendees are also important pieces of information to CSFN member organizations. Although on the surface the collection of this information seems relatively mundane the breakdown of attendees at the festivals provides insight into the festival's marketing efforts as well as being a valuable tool in creating interest from potential sponsors or advertisers.

The surveys found that gender differential of festival attendees is close to an expected gender ratio found in Windsor-Essex, with 52.7% of respondents being female and 47.3% being male.

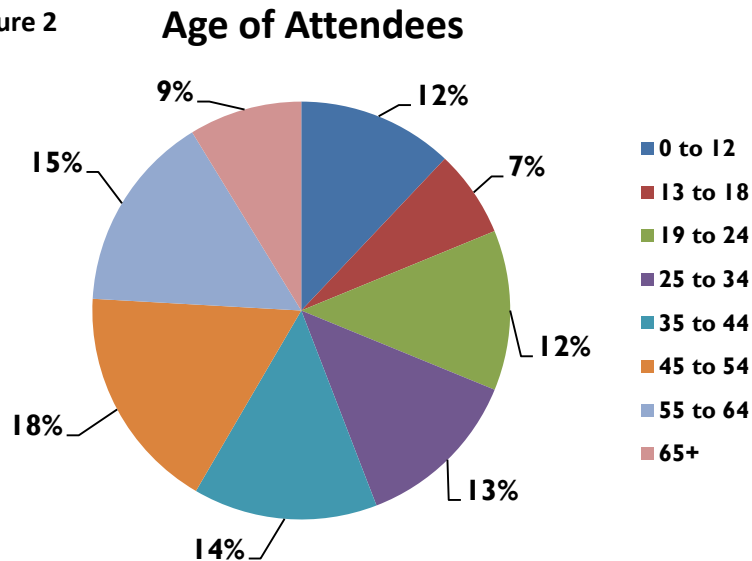
The slight advantage in female respondents is likely due to "artsy festivals" attracting a larger female audience. Additionally observations by the Survey Team have shown that, when approached, women are more receptive than men to completing a survey.

As for the broader demographic breakdown of the respondents and their companions we see a

relatively consistent distribution of attendees across age groups. The two groups which settle outside the relatively even distribution are 13-18 year olds and attendees over the age of 65. Looking at these age groups, the likely reason that the age 13-18 is smaller than other groups is due to the fact most festivals and events in the region are marketed as family events, which anecdotally young people see as uncool or boring to attend with family members. Unfortunately there is not a clear explanation available for why senior attendance is smaller than other age groups. The most obvious explanations for their small proportion of responses are weather (e.g. heat of the day in the summer), family centric orientation and lack of interest in completing surveys. Despite these two small age groups, overall festival and event organizers should be encouraged as their events are attracting healthy samples from all age groups across the Windsor-Essex region.

Unfortunately prior to 2014, due to the wording of the questions on the survey, it was difficult to accurately discern the total size of the party attending the festival. In the 2014 survey the question: "How many people are in your party?" was added. Prior to this change, two questions asked the age of male (or female) attendees in your group. These questions could be summed by survey to give a rough idea of party size but in many cases the surveyed individuals only answered with their own age rather than the ages of all party members or they offered check marks next to various age rather than number to denote age of party members which made tabulation difficult. From the 2014 survey, it was found

Figure 2



that 22.5% of survey respondents were in a party of 2, parties of 4 were second most common at 20.8%, parties of 3 at 15.6% and 5 member parties at 12.1%. Other party sizes were found to occur less than 10% of the time. This breakdown of attendee party size is not only important for estimating the overall attendance of the event but also gives CSFN and its members insight into spending patterns and demographics of the groups that are attending the festival.

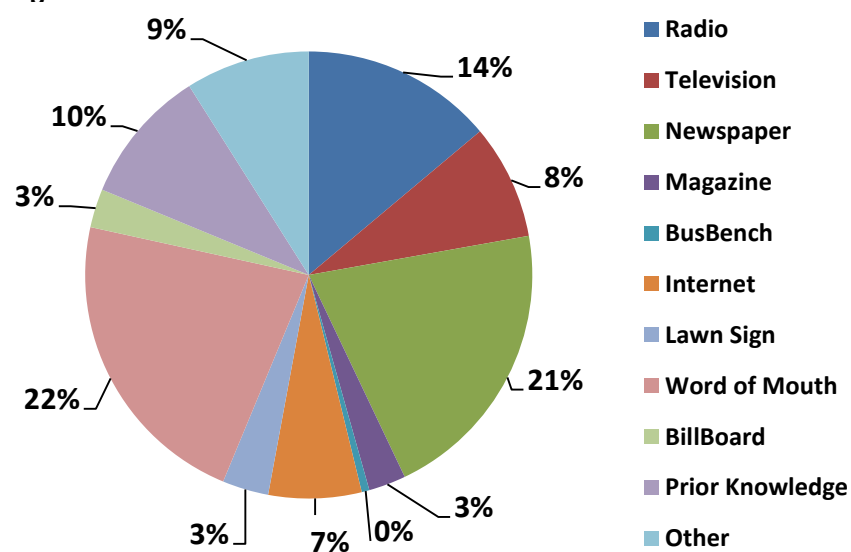
One of the most important pieces of information for festival organizers is the income breakdown of the festival attendees. Unfortunately, this question is often the hardest to gather data for as many people interpret inquiries about their household income and spending patterns at the festivals as “personal information”. Knowing the approximate household income of festival attendees is important to organizers as different festivals and events attempt to attract people from different socio-economic statuses. The income data enable organizers to determine effectiveness of their marketing efforts and if the festivals are attracting the targeted members of the community. This data can also be used to help attract sponsors and vendors to the festival. From the valid data that has been collected, festivals in Windsor-Essex attract crowds from across the socio-economic spectrum, with the individual festival breakdown showing spikes in certain income categories based on the festivals’ target audience. Using this demographic data, festival organizers are able to gain an understanding of who is attending their festival and hopefully leverage that information to improve their event going forward.

c. Marketing, Date(s) of Attendance and Return Attendance

Questions regarding the marketing of the festival, dates of attendance and if the surveyed individual has attended the festival in the past all provide important information to festival organizers about their ability to market and attract members of the community to their festival. Festivals and events use a number of mediums to market themselves with the CSFN Summer Festival Guide being one source for the community to gain information on festivals and events occurring in the Windsor-Essex Area.

As Figure 3 illustrates, by far local newspapers and word of mouth are the most common means for

Figure 3 How Did You Hear About This Festival?



attendees to learn about the festival and event. In contrast, magazines, lawn signs, billboards and bus benches seem to have little impact on spreading information about the festival and could probably be considered a waste of advertising money. The finding for the Internet and social media were also seen as surprising and an area that CSFN believes that its members have room for improvement. The small response for internet outreach could possibly be related to the

smaller proportion of festival attendees from the 13-18 year old demographic as they are anecdotally more likely to get information in the online sphere.

Knowing how people learned about the festival or event is important when paired with information about the date, the number of days attended and if a respondent had attended the festival in the past. Although the dates and number of days attended of a festival are known, for open gated events that last extended periods, Summer Fest for example, knowing the days that are most popular or comparing special events within the festival to the types of advertising used can be a powerful tool for organizers.

Finally knowing the number of repeat attendees and for how many years they have been coming to the event enable the festival organizers to potentially create a measure of satisfaction with the event. Given that 98% of festival attendees responded positively to the question of whether they would return to this festival or event again, it is clear that there is an ongoing improvement in the quality of events in our region. This measure, when coupled with the written feedback about the likes and dislikes of the festival, enables organizers to improve their event year after year by tackling specific likes and dislikes that are mentioned.

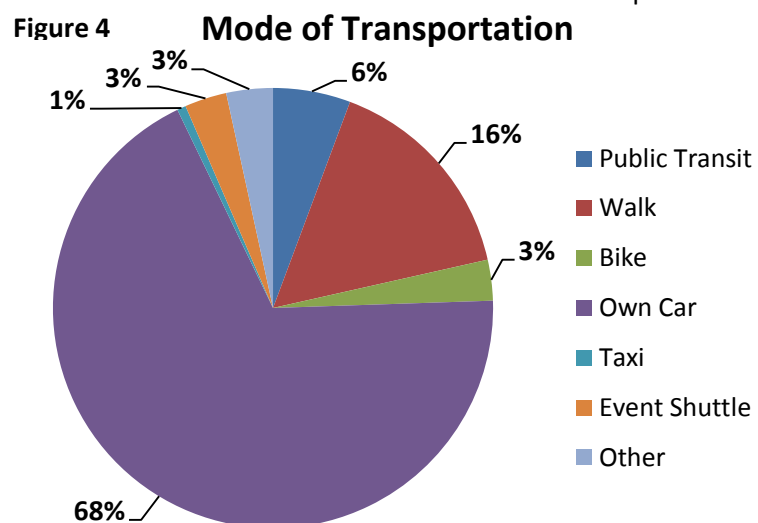
d. Mode of Transportation to the Festival

Determining the mode of transport of festival attendees is also a valuable piece of information that is gathered by CSFN. With festivals and events generally being centralized around a handful of key parks and plazas the ability for organizers to know how their attendees reached their festival is important for planning future growth of the event. Having knowledge of transport options also provides insight about whether shuttle services that are provided at some festivals are worthwhile for organizers to continue, or, if individuals are arriving via bicycle, require additional locking facilities to be put in place.

Although the actual breakdown of mode of transport varies widely between festivals, a few trends are clear from the averaged data in

Figure 4. First, the car remains the largest mode of transport for attendees to reach festivals and events in Windsor-Essex. This is important, as ease of parking and parking costs could be a factor in determining whether individuals attend a festival or event in the future.

Beyond cars, various green transport options - public transit, event shuttles, biking and walking - make up nearly 30% of respondents. These numbers have grown over the 6 years of the evaluation and likely have to do with the centralizing of festivals and events, in Windsor particularly, around the Festival Plaza



on the riverfront. This growth could be important to organizers who wish to emphasize “green” elements to their festival or event.

e. Expenditures at the Event

Event spending is likely the most important measure of the impact of the festival or event in the community. Simply put, dollars spent at a festival can not only help directly fund the event, they attract vendors and sponsors and generate an economic impact. Measuring this impact is often seen as a requirement for grants and community funding for organizers; as a result this information is highly coveted by festival organizers.

Over the 6 year survey period, attendees in Windsor-Essex spent approximately \$1.6 million, which averages to \$266,000 per year. Although this amount may seem small in the grand scheme of the Windsor-Essex economy by CSFN own estimates, the Survey Team is only reaching a small percentage (approximately 1%) of festival attendees annually. As a result the actual amount spent at festivals and events is likely several times higher than the values collected by the Survey Team.

Figure 5

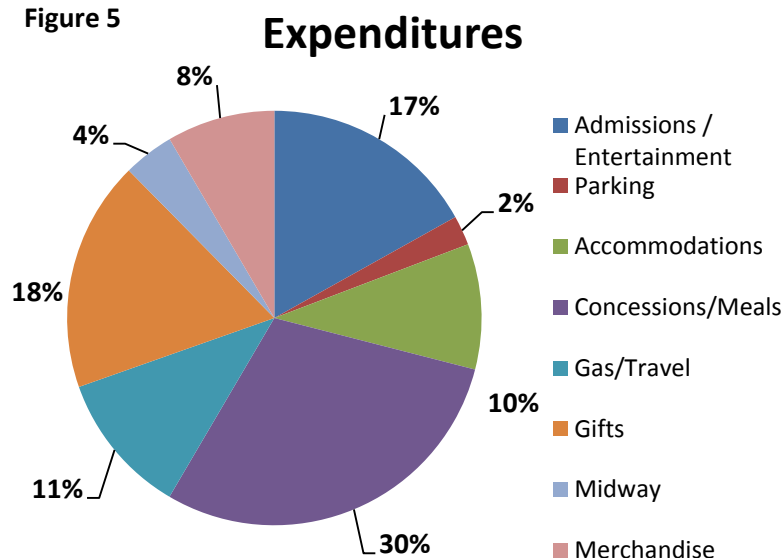


Figure 5 illustrates the breakdown of expenditures of festivals and events over the last 6 years.

Concessions and meals make up almost one-third (30%) of all festival and event expenditures, followed by gifts (18%) and Admission/Entertainment fees (17%). Naturally different festivals have a different distribution of expenditures based on the services and vendors that they offer or whether they charge an admission fee.

The fourth and fifth highest expenditures are attributed to

gas/travel and accommodation expenses. The takeaway from these two categories is that they are driven almost exclusively by out-of-town festival attendees. Since out-of-town attendees make up a much smaller portion of the surveyed sample when compared to local attendees it helps to illustrate the broader economic impact of attracting out-of-town guests to local festivals and events as every dollar they spend in the area, is a new dollar entering the Windsor-Essex market. In total, 2,022 out-of-town guests were surveyed, offering a total expenditure of \$214,255 in Windsor-Essex. Despite out-of-town guests representing only 7% of surveyed festival attendees, they make up over 13% of total recorded spending.

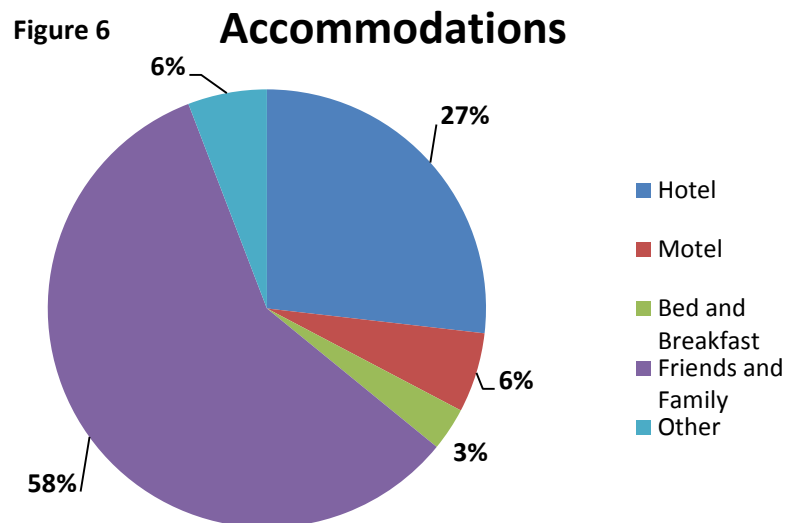
f. Out-of-Town Attendee Questions

Out-of-town guests at festivals and events are asked to complete a separate section of the questionnaire made up of eight questions. These questions ask out-of-town attendees the reason for their visit to the Windsor-Essex region, the mode of transit they used to reach the Windsor-Essex region, where they are staying in the region, how long they are staying in the region and, if they crossed the border, which crossing they used, how long of a delay they endured if any and the overall pleasantness of the crossing. Over the 6 years of surveying, a total of 2,022 respondents coming from outside of Windsor-Essex region have completed this section.

The principle takeaway from the out-of-town attendees' data is that the majority of these attendees either came to the region for the festival (37%) or were visiting friends and family in the region (32%) who likely brought them to the festival. Seventy five percent of respondents stay in the region for 3 days or less which correlates with the fact that the majority of festivals last a weekend. Fifty eight percent of respondents stay with friends and family while attending a festival which reinforces the fact that

attendance at festivals is tied with a local connection in the Windsor-Essex community. Unsurprisingly a clear majority of tourists come to Windsor-Essex by their own car, followed by Via Rail and flights to Windsor Airport as the three primary means of entering the region. The number of responses regarding the border crossing wait times, the crossing of choice and pleasantness of the crossing was unfortunately not large enough to justify inclusion or provide major insights on the cross-border experience.

An important takeaway from the general portion of the out-of-town survey is that 96% of these respondents said that they would return to the festival in the future (the overall response to this question is also 98% in favour). Not only does this show a high quality of satisfaction with the festivals in general, these out-of-town tourists are now more likely to return to Windsor-Essex region in the future to attend festivals or to tell others about the good things happening in our region.



VI. Discussion of Economic Impact

The primary question that this report is trying to answer is what the economic impact of festivals and events has been on the Windsor-Essex region? Although CSFN successfully surveyed over 27,380 individuals who spent approximately \$1.6 million dollars at festivals and events over a 6 year span, this measurement is not immediately generalizable.

The primary issue is that economic impact of festivals and events can be measured in a number of ways:



Balloonapalooza Downtown Windsor - 2013

gross revenue generated, spending by attendees, changes in business output as a result of the festival, tax revenue generated, and outsider revenue attracted are but a few examples. Many of the major challenges raised are highlighted in the *Guidelines: Survey Procedures for Tourism Economic Impact Assessments of Ungated or Open Access Events and Festivals*⁴. These guidelines were created as a joint venture between the Provincial Ministries of Tourism and are a solid starting point for defining the type of economic impact that will

be measured. Two of the big takeaways from this report are a pair of definitional items: who the “tourists” attending the festivals are, and the impact of substitution effects. Defining who the tourists are is an important element in determining economic impact. Of the 27,380 surveyed only 2,022 were identified as out-of-town tourists. This means that on average an approximate 4,563 people are surveyed each year, of which about 340 are from outside the Windsor-Essex region. These out-of-town tourists are considered more important to the evaluation of the economic impact of festivals due to the substitution effect.

The substitution effect is a simple principle based on the idea that people live on a budget and as a result they have only a limited amount to spend on leisure activities. This means that local attendees’ of festivals are choosing to spend their money at the festival over another activity but it can be assumed that the money would have been spent on another form of entertainment locally thus stimulating the local economy. This is why out-of-town tourists are generally weighed as more important to calculating the economic impact of festivals and events as these attendees are choosing to bring dollars into a local economy that would have otherwise likely been spent in another area while local attendees would have spent their money elsewhere in the region if they didn’t attend the festival.

⁴ http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/research/resources/Guidelines_Econ_Impact_Ungated_Events_2007.pdf

The principle question that must then be asked is how the expenditures from in-town and out-of-town tourists are weighted against one another. Some conservative economic evaluations only count out-of-town tourist expenditures, while others place a modifier on the local expenditures to lessen its impact on the total expenditures. CSFN has decided that all expenditures in the Windsor-Essex area are to be weighted equally for three primary reasons: first, CSFN sees individuals attending festivals and events in Windsor-Essex as being “tourists in our own backyard”. Currently no other organization attempts to measure the impact of festival and events on the local economy and in order to fulfill its mandate collecting the broadest dataset and measures are considered the most important.

The second reason that CSFN decides to use equal weighting of expenditures is because many of the vendors at festivals and events in Windsor-Essex are local small businesses or craftspeople. Even if the money spent at the festival or event in Windsor-Essex may have been spent elsewhere in the region, the impact of festival sales on small businesses or craftsperson is much greater than that money being spent at general retail or chain establishments.



Windsor Canada Parade in Walkerville

Finally, unlike many other regions, Windsor-Essex faces the unique challenge of having Detroit, Michigan as a neighbour. For many Windsorites, crossing the border is a daily occurrence and given the plethora of cultural and entertainment attractions found in Detroit, Windsor-Essex faces the challenge of keeping locals at home to attend local events. Due to the proximity to our American neighbour, the traditional definition of substitution effect doesn't hold entirely true for our region as many Windsorites consider Detroit as “local”. As a result, shopping and entertainment dollars are regularly spent across the border and every dollar spent in the United States is not only a dollar not spent in Windsor-Essex but also not spent in Canada.

With these caveats in mind, CSFN feels that it is important to measure the total impact of all expenditures by attendees at festivals and events in the Windsor-Essex area. From the 27,380 valid surveys collected over the 6 year period, a total of \$1,612,018 of direct spending was measured at the festivals and events in the Windsor-Essex region of which \$214,255 was spent by tourists traveling from outside the region. Since the Survey Team only reaches a small percentage of festival attendees and the size of the sample vary widely between festivals depending on conditions and festival format establishing an estimate of total economic impact is difficult to undertake.

Given the estimated 400,000-500,000 people who annually attend festivals in Windsor-Essex and the fact that on average the CSFN Survey Team reach less than 1% of that number each year, a crude

estimation would be to assume that the approximate \$214,000 worth of spending that is surveyed annually, represents less than 1% of the total spending meaning an approximate impact of \$21 million. Obviously there are problems with that number. For example as the demographic breakdown illustrates, 0-12 year olds make up approximately 12% of the festival attendees and are probably unlikely to be spending money or having an equal share of spending spent on them. The same can be said for individuals who completed the survey but did not answer the expenditures questions, or people who did not spend money at festivals and events. Even if you only measure the out-of-town attendees' impact, using the same crude measures calculates to approximately \$3 million in expenditures. The actual value of out-of-town attendees to festivals and events is likely in the several hundreds of thousands of dollars range per year entering the region.

Given the approximate annual festival and event attendance of 400,000-500,000 people, and that the annual average spending per survey falls in the range of \$45-\$58, to assume an approximate \$10 per person average expenditure is not an unreasonable measure. While not every person would spend the same average amount, large lower cost events (e.g. Canada Day Parade, Fireworks etc.) are offset by smaller higher cost events and it must be considered that out-of-town guests with higher travel and accommodation costs help raise the spending average for purposes of calculating economic impact. With this in mind, CSFN feels confident in estimating that the total range of expenditures of festival and event attendees in the Windsor-Essex region is approximately \$5-6 million per year. This range in expenditures is to allow for variations in festival attendance and spending pattern on an annual basis, as a summer with bad weather could very easily see the spending levels at much lower rates than a summer with good weather.



Amherstburg Canada Day/Ice Cream Festival
The crowd gathers waiting for the fireworks at Fort Malden

VII. Conclusions

The impact of festivals and events on the Windsor-Essex region and economy are clear. Although CSFN's estimate of \$5-6 million dollars per year is crude we feel that it is a valuable measure not only for our member organizations but also for the community at large. With a better understanding of the impact of festivals and events on their communities, organizers can leverage this information to better attract tourists, both local and from out-of-town, to their event. Organizers can also use this information to make their festival and event more sustainable over the long term.

Going forward, CSFN recognizes that it must improve its practices and methods as we are currently only capturing one portion of festival activity in Windsor-Essex. Although currently CSFN receives feedback from its member organizations following their festivals and events, this feedback has always been informal. Since CSFN is partially supported by providing a service to the festival organizers, conducting surveys of these organizers has always been a lower priority when compared to promptly and accurately presenting the data gathered at their event. Going forward, we plan to formally collect broader information from festival organizers about their event including: sponsors information, improved attendance figures, vendor information and information about the number and rolls of volunteers at the events.

A second priority for the future is the development of a festival and event vendor survey. CSFN recognizes that although a majority of vendors at festivals and events call the Windsor-Essex region home, it is likely that for many of the more well-known art and food festivals out-of-town vendors are likely to be attracted to the region in order to test a new market. Naturally, out-of-town vendors take profits from the festival home with them, while also paying to travel and stay in the region. Other questions for vendors would include items such as what alternative activity the vendor would have undertaken if they did not attend the festival, what are the vendor's expected and final sales, and did they bring/pay for extra staff or materials to come to the festival. Together these future questions will help clarify substitution effects within CSFN economic impact numbers.

Finally and most importantly, we hope to expand our ability to reach more festivals, their attendees and have additional surveys completed each year. By streamlining the survey, maximizing the number of members' events we attend and expanding our awareness of festivals and events, CSFN will be able to collect higher quality data and improve the overall impact of festivals and events in the Windsor-Essex region.

Appendix 1: Festivals Attendees

Festival Name	Year of Attendance
Amherstburg Canada Day/ Ice Cream Festival	2009-2014
Amherstburg Rib Fest	2011, 2014
Art by the River	2009, 2010, 2012-2014
Art in the Park	2009-2014
Balloonapalooza	2011-2014
Belle River Classic Boat Show	2012
Belle River Sun Splash	2009-2014
Blues Fest	2009-2014
Camp for Comparison	2009
Carrousel by the River/of Nations	2009-2014
Comber Fair	2010, 2012-2014
Dancing with the Stars	2010
Downtown Goes Motown	2009
Dragon Boat	2009-2014
Elvis Festival	2009-2012, 2014
Emancipations	2009, 2010, 2012
Essex Fun Fest	2009-2014
Essex Steam and Gas	2012-2014
Essex Steam and Gas/Camp 4 Compassion	2010
Explore the Shore	2012-2014
Festival Epicure	2009
Fork & Cork	2012-2014
General Brock Sailaway & Celebration	2012
Handicapable Fishing Derby	2010
Lake Fest	2009
LaSalle Strawberry Festival	2010
Pelee Fest	2009
Red Bull Downtown Event	2009-2010
Rock'n Horse Fest	2012-2013
Roots to Boots	2012
Summer Fest/Fireworks & Canada Day	2009-2014
Tecumseh Corn Festival	2009-2014
The Art of Eating	2009-2014
Tomato Festival	2009, 2010, 2012, 2013
Walkerville Walk & Rock	2010, 2012-2014
Windsor Air Show	2010
Windsor Pride	2009-2013

Appendix 2: Questionnaire



**ENTER TO WIN
A VIA RAIL TRIP FOR 2**
PLEASE PRINT



Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ Prov./State: _____ Postal/Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

**I HEREBY AUTHORIZE CANADA SOUTH FESTIVAL NETWORK TO CONTACT ME
BY MAIL OR EMAIL: (initial) _____**

1) How many times have you been to this festival, event or sport function? (circle)

1 2 3 4 5+ Festival Name _____

2) Which days did you attend/plan to attend this festival, event or sport function? (circle)

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

3) What mode of transportation did you use to arrive at this festival, event or sport function?

Event Shuttle Walked Bike Public Trans Own Car Taxi Boat/Ferry

VIA Rail Airplane Other _____ (please specify)

4) How many people in your party? (circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

5) What is your Gender and Age?

**** MALE ****

0-12		35-44	
13-18		45-54	
19-24		55-64	
25-34		65+	

****FEMALE****

0-12		35-44	
13-18		45-54	
19-24		55-64	
25-34		65+	

6) Approximately how much was spent on the following?

Entertainment/Admission Fee _____ Parking _____

Accommodations _____ Concessions/Meal/Drinks _____

Gas/Travel _____ Gifts/Souvenirs _____

Midway/Festival Rides _____ Merchandise _____

7) How did you find out about this festival? (circle)

Radio Television Newspaper Magazines Bus Bench Internet Lawn Sign

Word of Mouth Billboard Prior Knowledge Other

8) What did you like about this festival, event or sport function?

9) What would you change or improve about this festival, event or sport function in the future? _____

PLEASE CONTINUE ON BACK

11) What is your approximate household income?

< \$25,000 _____ \$25,000-\$44,000 _____ \$45,000-\$59,000 _____

\$60,000-\$79,000 _____ \$80,000-\$100,000 _____ \$100,000+ _____

12) Would you come back to this festival, event or sport function? YES NO

13) How many festivals, events or sport functions will you attend in Windsor, Essex and Pelee Island area this year? 1 2 3 4 5+

Additional comments _____

PLEASE CONTINUE IF YOU ARE NOT A LOCAL RESIDENT

10a) Number of days/nights spent in the area? 1 2 3 4 5+

10b) What type of accommodation did you use?

Hotel _____ Motel _____ B&B _____ Friends/Family _____ Campground _____

10c) What was the reason for your visit?

Vacation _____ Business _____ Friends/Family _____ Festival _____ Other _____

10d) How did you enter the Windsor/Essex County area?

Windsor Airport _____ VIA Rail _____ Own Car _____ Rental Vehicle _____

Greyhound Bus _____ Chartered Bus/Group Tour _____ Other _____

10e) Did you cross any international border? YES NO

10f) If YES, which border crossing did you use?

Detroit/Windsor Tunnel _____ Ambassador Bridge (Windsor) _____

Bluewater Bridge (Sarnia) _____ Peace Bridge (Niagara Falls) _____

Lewiston-Queenston Bridge (Niagara Falls) _____ Pelee Island _____

10g) What was your border wait time at that crossing?

5 mins _____ 10 mins _____ 15 mins _____ 30 mins _____ 45 mins _____ 60 mins + _____

10h) Was your border crossing a pleasant one? YES NO

If NO, why? _____