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Big Sky Documentary Film Festival Study

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Case Study Report 2009-4

Introduction

The 6th annual Big Sky Documentary Film Festival (BSDFF) showed 143 films February 13-22, 2009 in Missoula, Montana. The films represented more than 30 countries within the non-fiction form. Since the BSDFF has grown in length, film submissions, and attendees each year, organizers of the film festival wanted to know more about the attendees and festival contribution to the Missoula economy. This report provides information on attendees including where from, group size, number of films attended, satisfaction with the event, and basic demographics. In addition, spending by individual attendees from outside Missoula County is estimated.

Methods

The primary purpose of the study was to determine total direct spending of BSDFF attendees in the Missoula economy. A second purpose was to gain an understanding of who attends the BSDFF. Methodology consisted of two parts: 1) asking every attendee at random films throughout the event where they were from and the number of films they were attending during the 10 day festival, and 2) administering a survey with expenditure and demographic questions to random selected attendees at the film festival.

The first portion of the methodology (asking every attendee at certain films where they were from and number of films attended) was essential in determining the attendee population of the BSDFF. Volunteers were stationed at the ticket booth area of the festival to ask attendees these two questions. The number of films seen per person could then be divided into the total number of tickets sold to represent the actual number of individuals who attended the event. This estimate also included pass-holders of the films. The attendees' residence was an essential piece of information for this study as well because it would allow the expenditure results to be expanded to the entire festival population. For example, if 100 out-of-county residents were surveyed and their average spending was \$200 each, the total number of non-resident visitors would be needed to estimate their total expenditures in Missoula.

Twenty-five randomly assigned films were scheduled for the sample. This random schedule represented over one-fourth of the films as well as each time slot during the 10 days. However, when the data were compiled, it was discovered that only 10 films were surveyed for the pertinent information of place of residence and number of films seen. This represents only 189 actual responses of over 5,000 tickets and 9,000 people through the turnstile or less than four percent of all tickets sold. Without a higher count, it is unreliable to determine the direct spending and impact of this festival. Therefore, the expenditure information will be provided for the out-of-county respondents, but should **not** be used to speculate on the BSDFF's total direct spending in Missoula.

The second portion of the methodology surveyed a random sampling of attendees to the festival before the start of the films. Volunteers were stationed inside the Wilma Theater to administer the survey to attendees. For groups from Missoula County, every member was asked to fill out a survey, and for out-of-county groups, only one member of the group was asked to complete the survey. Attendees from Missoula County and those from outside Missoula County who were in

Missoula for a purpose other than attending the film festival were not asked to fill out the expenditure information. These respondents were not asked the expenditure questions because the money they spent in Missoula can not be directly tied to the film fest other than the film’s ticket prices. The survey consisted of 33 questions (see Appendix A). People willing to fill out the survey were given a clipboard, pen, and a survey. Upon completion of the survey, attendees handed the clipboard and survey back to the volunteer. Only 146 questionnaires were completed by festival attendees.

Limitations

The small sample size (n=146) makes the results less reliable in generalizing to the entire population of Big Sky Documentary Film Festival attendees. Out of the 146 respondents, only 33 were from out-of-county, and only 25 respondents stated that the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival was their primary reason for visiting Missoula. This very small sample size of non-Missoula residents makes it impossible to generalize the direct spending attributable to the BSDF in Missoula. The expenditures will be represented for only the 25 respondents who answered that they were not from Missoula County and that their primary purpose for visiting Missoula was to attend the film festival.

Results

An estimation of the number of attendees is presented in this section first, followed by results for out-of-county attendees and Missoula County attendees. Summaries are provided in the text while percentages are given for each question on the survey for all respondents, Missoula respondents, and out-of-county respondents in Appendix B.

Film Festival Attendee Estimation

Film festival attendance was estimated based on the number of total people through the gates (provided by BSDF organizers) and the sample of Missoula and out-of-county attendees from the sample count at the ticket booth.

Table 1: Attendee Numbers

Number of people through the gates	9590
Number of sample through the gates	189
Missoula county sample	
Missoula County attendees	134
Average # of films attended	5.9
Out-of-county sample	
Out-of-county attendees	55
Average # of films attended	4.1

The following formulas were used to estimate the number of people who actually attended the BSDFF:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Total Missoula attendees:} \quad (134/189 \times 9590) / 5.9 = 1,152 \\
 \text{Total out-of-county attendees:} \quad (55/189 \times 9590) / 4.1 = 681 \\
 \text{Total attendees:} \quad \underline{\quad \quad \quad 1,833^*}
 \end{array}$$

* This is a gross estimate and based on simple averages of the number of films attended

Out-of-County Attendees

The small sample of out-of-county attendees represents 25 people from out-of-state or country and 8 people from Montana (outside Missoula County) (see Table 2). Twenty-two attendees reported spending at least one night away from home with an average of 5.3 nights. Eleven respondents did not report spending a night away from home.

Table 2: Out-of-state Respondents

California	5
New York	3
Missouri	3
Texas	2
Washington	2
Utah	1
Idaho	1
Massachusetts	1
Connecticut	1
Delaware	1
Florida	1
Ontario, Canada	1
British Columbia, Canada	1

Thirteen percent of out-of-county attendees had previously attended the BSDFF. Word-of-mouth and the Internet were the main sources of information but not surprisingly 13 percent indicated previous attendance as how they heard about the festival. Plans to attend the festival were made one to six months ago by 54 percent of the attendees and within the last month by 25 percent of the out-of-county attendees.

Out-of-county attendees were satisfied with the festival. Eighty-three percent were very satisfied with the location of the event. We do not know if they were thinking of the Wilma Theater or Missoula when answering that question, but it was the variable with the highest satisfaction

rating. The length of festival was acceptable for 83 percent of the attendees while 13 percent would prefer it to be shorter. For full percentages for each question, refer to Appendix B.

Expenditures

Expenditure information was asked of respondents from outside Missoula County who were visiting Missoula primarily to attend the film festival. The survey asked that they report their best estimate of the total amount of money they and their family (if applicable) spent in Missoula in the following categories: lodging, camping, restaurant, bar, gratuity (tips), groceries/snacks, retail goods, entrance fees/admissions/licenses, other entertainment/recreation, gasoline, local transportation, and auto rental. Two means are provided. First, the mean expenditure for only those respondents who reported actually spending money in each individual category was estimated. Second, the mean of all respondents is provided. The mean expenditure for each category can be found in Table 2 along with the percentage of people who reported that they spent money in that category. The mean total expenditure for the 25 non-residents was \$556.60. The total reported expenditure for the 25 non-Missoula County respondents who were in Missoula primarily for the film festival was \$13,950. Expenditure results cannot be expanded to represent the total economic impact of the film festival to Missoula’s economy, however, sample totals are presented below.

Table 1- Expenditure Data: Total Money Spent in Missoula (from 25 people)

Expenditure Category	Number of respondents who spent money in each category (out of 25)	Mean expenditures of attendees who reported that they spent money in these categories	Median expenditures of attendees who reported that they spent money in these categories	Range (minimum and Maximum)	% of respondents who reported spending money in each category	Mean expenditures averaged across all non-Missoula respondents (n=25)
Lodging (Motel/Hotel/B&B)	15	\$376.67	\$220.00	\$50-\$1300	60%	\$226.00
Campground	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00
Restaurant	20	\$194.50	\$152.50	\$35-\$600	80%	\$155.60
Bar	11	\$85	\$50	\$35-\$200	44%	\$37.40
Groceries/Snacks	9	\$41.11	\$25.00	\$10-\$150	36%	\$14.80
Retail goods	11	\$110.00	\$90.00	\$20-\$350	44%	\$48.40
Licenses, entrance fees, admissions	4	\$121.25	\$70.00	\$25-\$320	16%	\$19.40
Other entertainment/Recreation	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00
Gasoline	5	\$32.00	\$30.00	\$20-\$50	20%	\$6.40
Local transportation	4	\$20.00	\$22.50	\$10-\$25	16%	\$3.20
Auto rental	2	\$162.50	\$162.50	\$100-\$225	8%	\$13.00
Gratuity	13	\$62.31	\$40.00	\$15-\$200	52%	\$32.40
Mean Expenditure Total					-	*\$556.60
TOTAL Contribution of 25 out-of-county attendees						*\$13,915

* The gross estimate of the number of out-of-county attendees is based on too small a sample size to generalize to the full population, therefore total direct spending is not provided.

Missoula County Attendees

Of the 146 respondents, 113 were from Missoula County. Missoula County attendees represent approximately 71 percent of all attendees. Thirty-six percent were first time attendees. Word-of-mouth and previous attendance were the two highest ways that attendees heard about the BSDFF (57% and 53% respectively). Forty-six percent indicated the newspaper as a source of information as well.

Interestingly, 26 percent made plans to attend the festival over 6 months ago, however 30 percent made plans within the week and 26 percent made plans 1-4 weeks prior to the event.

Satisfaction was very high for the festival. The event location was rated the highest satisfaction level followed by festival programming and event staff.

Nearly half of the attendees indicated annual household income of less the \$25,000 probably indicating a large audience of students to the event. This is augmented by 73 percent indicating an average age between 18 and 34. For full percentages for each question, refer to Appendix B.

Results of Open Ended Response Questions

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments pertaining to the BSDFF. Their verbatim responses can be found in Appendix C.

Appendix A- Survey Instrument

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival 2009

1. Which of the following categories best describes your current residence?
 Missoula County (Skip to question 21 on the back page) Montana (Not Missoula County) Outside Montana (within the US) International
2. What is your zip code?
3. If an international visitor, in which country do you reside?
4. Was attending the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival your primary reason for being in Missoula?
 Yes No
5. What other reasons were you visiting Missoula? (X all that apply)
 None - the event was my reason Shopping Business/convention/meeting
 Vacation/recreation/pleasure Visit friends/relatives Just passing through

On this trip, how many total nights did you stay away from home: (enter "0" if no nights)

6. In Montana 7. In Missoula
8. During the film festival, what type of accommodations did you stay in? (X all that apply)
 Hotel/motel/bed & breakfast Second home or condo/cabin Resort/condominium Campground
 Home of friend/relative Rented cabin/home Guest ranch

EXPENDITURES - Please enter your best estimate of the TOTAL amount of money (U.S. dollars) you (and your family or group, if applicable) spent in Missoula while here during the film festival.

Accommodations

9. Lodging

10. Camping

Food

11. Restaurant

12. Bar

13. Gratuity (tips)

14. Groceries/Snacks

Retail/Services

15. Retail goods

16. Entrance fees, admissions, licenses

17. Other entertainment/ Recreation

Transportation

18. Gasoline

19. Local transportation

20. Auto rental

Missoula County Residents Continue Here

21. Have you previously attended the Big Sky Documentary Film festival? Yes No
22. How did you hear about this film festival? (X all that apply)
 Word of mouth Newspaper Posters Internet Group or club
 Attended previously Radio TV Flyer Retail outlet
23. How long ago did you make plans to attend the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival?
 Today 1-7 days ago 1-4 weeks ago 1-6 months ago over 6 months ago
24. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following aspects of the event.
- | | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Organization of the event | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Event staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Location of the event | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Exhibition (audio/video) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Festival programming | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Duration of the event | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
25. Do you think the film festival's overall length should ...
 remain the same be shorter be longer
26. How many films are you planning on attending throughout this current film festival?
27. What option best describes your group? (X only one)
 Self Immediate family Family & friends Business associates
 Couple Extended family Friends Organized group or club
28. Including you, how many people are in your group?
29. Please indicate what ages are represented in your group (X all that apply)
 0-5 years 11-17 years 25-34 years 45-54 years 65-74 years
 6-10 years 18-24 years 35-44 years 55-64 years 75 and over
30. What is your age?
31. What is your gender? Male Female
32. What best describes your annual household income in US dollars (X only one)
 Less than \$25,000 \$50,000 to 74,999 \$100,000 to 124,999 \$150,000 to 199,999
 \$25,000 to 49,999 \$75,000 to 99,999 \$125,000 to 149,999 \$200,000 and over
33. Please provide any additional comments regarding the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.

Date

Appendix B- Results

BIG SKY DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL SURVEY

Results for All Respondents (Sample Size 146)

Which of the following categories best describes your current residence?

77% *Missoula County* 6% *Montana (Not Missoula County)* 16% *Outside Montana (within the US)* 1% *International*

Have you previously attended the Big Sky Documentary Film festival?

55% *Yes* 45% *No*

How did you hear about this film festival? (X all that apply)

55% *Word of mouth* 46% *Attended previously* 39% *Newspaper* 19% *Posters* 11% *Radio*
19% *Internet* 13% *Flyer* 5% *Group or Club* 3% *Retail outlet* 2% *TV*

How long ago did you make plans to attend the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival?

8% *Today* 28% *1-7 days ago* 26% *1-4 weeks ago* 18% *1-6 months ago* 21% *over 6 months ago*

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following aspects of the event.

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
Organization of the event	67%	32%	1%	0.0%
Event staff	78%	22%	0.0%	0.0%
Location of the event	87%	13%	0.0%	0.0%
Exhibition (audio/video)	69%	30%	1%	0.0%
Festival programming	75%	24%	1%	0.0%
Duration of the event	75%	23%	1%	1%

Do you think the film festival's overall length should ...

85% *remain the same* 6% *be shorter* 10% *be longer*

How many films are you planning on attending throughout this current film festival?

Average of 5.05 films

What option best describes your group? (X only one)

25% <i>Self</i>	6% <i>Immediate family</i>	11% <i>Family & friends</i>	2% <i>Business associates</i>
40% <i>Couple</i>	3% <i>Extended family</i>	14% <i>Friends</i>	1% <i>Organized group or club</i>

Including you, how many people are in your group?

Average of 3 people per a group

Please indicate what ages are represented in your group (X all that apply)

1% <i>0-5 years</i>	2% <i>6-10 years</i>	5% <i>11-17 years</i>	24% <i>18-24 years</i>	44% <i>25-34 years</i>
21% <i>35-44 years</i>	19% <i>45-54 years</i>	10% <i>55-64 years</i>	6% <i>65-74 years</i>	1% <i>75 and over</i>

What is your age?

Average Age of 36 years old

What is your gender?

51% *Male* **49%** *Female*

What best describes your annual household income in US dollars (X only one)

46% <i>Less than \$25,000</i>	14% <i>\$50,000 to 74,999</i>	7% <i>\$100,000 to 124,999</i>	2% <i>\$150,000 to 199,999</i>
21% <i>\$25,000 to 49,999</i>	10% <i>\$75,000 to 99,999</i>	0.0% <i>\$125,000 to 149,999</i>	2% <i>\$200,000 and over</i>

Results for Missoula County Respondents (Sample Size 113)

Have you previously attended the Big Sky Documentary Film festival?

64% *Yes*

36% *No*

How did you hear about this film festival? (X all that apply)

57% Word of mouth	53% Attended previously	46% Newspaper	23% Posters	12% Radio
14% Internet	16% Flyer	6% Group or Club	4% Retail outlet	3% TV

How long ago did you make plans to attend the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival?

9% *Today*

30% *1-7 days ago*

26% *1-4 weeks ago*

9% *1-6 months ago*

26% *over 6 months ago*

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following aspects of the event.

	<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
Organization of the event	69%	31%	0.0%	0.0%
Event staff	78%	22%	0.0%	0.0%
Location of the event	88%	12%	0.0%	0.0%
Exhibition (audio/video)	69%	30%	1%	0.0%
Festival programming	79%	20%	1%	0.0%
Duration of the event	76%	22%	1%	0.0%

Do you think the film festival's overall length should ...

85% *remain the same*

4% *be shorter*

11% *be longer*

How many films are you planning on attending throughout this current film festival?

Average of **5.9** films

What option best describes your group? (X only one)

24% *Self*

4% *Immediate family*

10% *Family & friends*

1% *Business associates*

42% *Couple*

3% *Extended family*

16% *Friends*

1% *Organized group or club*

Including you, how many people are in your group?

Average of **3** people per a group

Please indicate what ages are represented in your group (X all that apply)

0% 0-5 years	2% 6-10 years	5% 11-17 years	25% 18-24 years	48% 25-34 years
16% 35-44 years	17% 45-54 years	7% 55-64 years	5% 65-74 years	1% 75 and over

What is your age?

Average Age of 36 years old

What is your gender?

48% Male **52%** Female

What best describes your annual household income in US dollars (X only one)

49% Less than \$25,000	14% \$50,000 to 74,999	6% \$100,000 to 124,999	1% \$150,000 to 199,999
23% \$25,000 to 49,999	7% \$75,000 to 99,999	0.0% \$125,000 to 149,999	1% \$200,000 and over

Do you think the film festival's overall length should ...

83% *remain the same* **13%** *be shorter* **4%** *be longer*

How many films are you planning on attending throughout this current film festival?

Average of **4.1** films

What option best describes your group? (X only one)

29% <i>Self</i>	17% <i>Immediate family</i>	13% <i>Family & friends</i>	4% <i>Business associates</i>
29% <i>Couple</i>	4% <i>Extended family</i>	4% <i>Friends</i>	0% <i>Organized group or club</i>

Including you, how many people are in your group?

Average of **2** people per a group

Please indicate what ages are represented in your group (X all that apply)

4% <i>0-5 years</i>	0.0% <i>6-10 years</i>	9% <i>11-17 years</i>	22% <i>18-24 years</i>	26% <i>25-34 years</i>
44% <i>35-44 years</i>	26% <i>45-54 years</i>	22% <i>55-64 years</i>	13% <i>65-74 years</i>	0.0% <i>75 and over</i>

What is your age?

Average Age of **38** years old

What is your gender?

58% *Male* **42%** *Female*

What best describes your annual household income in US dollars (X only one)

33% <i>Less than \$25,000</i>	13% <i>\$50,000 to 74,999</i>	8% <i>\$100,000 to 124,999</i>	4% <i>\$150,000 to 199,999</i>
13% <i>\$25,000 to 49,999</i>	21% <i>\$75,000 to 99,999</i>	0.0% <i>\$125,000 to 149,999</i>	8% <i>\$200,000 and over</i>

Appendix C- Open-ended Responses

Question #33: Please provide any additional comments regarding the BSDFF.

1. Please turn on heat, keep sessions on time, somehow better delimitate sessions in brochures
2. An additional screen or two would help with the evening shows. It would be nice if the Roxy, UM and the Crystal were involved
3. As a night time employee, I miss out by not having films playing during the day mid week. It happens. Nice selection of movies.
4. Awesome
5. AWESOME
6. Bigger and better every year. Thanks for keeping it going
7. Consider an advance sale discount to help your cash flow if attendees are willing to purchase tickets/passes at least 72 hours prior to opening night.
8. cool, thanks
9. Don't show DVD setup on screen. Start movies on time. List movies in showtime order instead of alphabetically
10. Don't Stop
11. Excellent Event, Keep it coming
12. Excellent, so enjoyable! Thanks for doing great work in Missoula!
13. F___ing Awesome!!
14. F___ing Sweet!
15. Films should show earlier
16. fun!
17. Good stuff!
18. Great films in a great setting- keep it up!
19. Great stuff! Thanks you for making it longer and less during the day.
20. great stuff. organization and programming. It's a true economic and cultural asset to Montana and Missoula
21. Great!
22. I'm just getting started here, but The 'South'/Alloy Orchestra event was terrific- distinctive and beautifully realized. It is also great that you are doing the belinger retrospective.
23. I have attended four years with an all-screenings pass. The pass is a good value- I'm a student and this is my big entertainment splurge each year. I always enjoy the selection of films. Also-I enjoy the priority seating in the balcony. I've sat in the same seat for all four years a (very student friendly)
24. I like it
25. I like this year's set up with two weekends
26. I love it. One of my favorite things in Missoula. I look forward to it every year. Keep it up!
27. I love the questions and answers with the film makers; I would love more of these!
28. I love this festival
29. I loved the film festival
30. I think some movies should be played during the day again, because people like myself work at night and cannot attend as many movies
31. It's Great!
32. It's too cold in the Wilma!

33. Jeff medley, Travis, Doug (film maker) and volunteers were awesome. especially Mike, Nikki Fay, Laura, and Kathleen King. Helpful, friendly, professional and warm.
34. Keep up the good work!
35. Look forward to it every year- Like that its longer this year
36. Love it!
37. Love you guys
38. Make it be cheaper. I'm poor. F----- Good!
39. More Music documentaries
40. My favorite event in Missoula!
41. My film was selected and I stayed in a Wilma Condo
42. Nice work. Keep it up. "Recession Special" ticketing was a great idea. I am frustrated by scheduling only because I can not see everything I want- My bad, not yours. Any chance of multiple showings specific films in the future?
43. One of my favorite festivals
44. Provide food- Like a snack bar- sandwiches, etc.
45. Shackleton movie was a great draw- do something similar
46. Thank you!
47. Thanks for doing the carbon offset!!!
48. Thanks for putting on this event
49. Thanks!
50. Thanks! Love it!
51. The heat could be turned up. Very Cold and many people have commented on this. Get concrete block to hold side exit door open at the end of the film
52. The program should read "Big Sky Documentary Film Festival on the front to help identify and promote the event
53. The recession pass is awesome!
54. This is a great event. Keep it going!
55. This is my favorite annual event and will remain so. It's well conceived, well-organized and, for the most part the films are well-chosen, opening new vistas for me each year.
56. This is my second year attending. I was impressed with the quality of the films last year and so far this year it is the same. I love what you are doing! Keep it up!
57. We love BSDFF!
58. We will be back
59. Well organized and great selection of films. I couldn't do it better if I was God!
60. When my kiddos get big enough this will be my week vacation. Thanks!
61. wonderful does!
62. Would appreciate better local listings of movies and PR< more local media
63. You need better women's shirts with scoop neck! Bring back movies during the day Tuesday-Friday