

TOURISM CENTER

Irish Fair of Minnesota: Profile of Attendees 2014

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Irish Fair of Minnesota: Profile of Attendees 2014

October 1, 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the invitation of the Irish Fair of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Tourism Center (UMTC) profiled its 2014 attendees. The purpose of the profile was to better understand attendee characteristics, to assist marketing decisions, to enhance the event itself, and to maximize benefits to the community. As such, several attendee characteristics were of interest, including demographics, information sources attendees used to learn of the Fair, most enjoyable attributes of the Fair, main reason to attend the Fair, expenditures related to the Fair, and modes of transportation. Additionally, 2014 profile results were compared to those of 2007 and 2011, where possible, to understand consistencies and changes in attendee characteristics.

METHODS

An on-site questionnaire was administered to Fair attendees between Friday, August 8 and Sunday, August 10, 2014. A convenience sampling approach was implemented, with a sampling plan that ensures coverage across activities and grounds during the entire Fair. A total of 587 parties were contacted and 479 questionnaires were completed, resulting in an 82 percent completion rate. Completed questionnaires were entered, cleaned, and checked using SPSS (version 22.0), a statistical analysis software.

RESULTS

Demographics

Most often, respondents were female (62.6 percent), non-Hispanic (97.4 percent), white (88.2 percent), and of Irish descent (66.2 percent). The average age of 2014 Irish Fair attendees was 47 years old, and the most frequently cited income category was \$50,000-\$99,999. Eighty percent of respondents lived within 25 miles of Harriet Island Regional Park, while 13 percent traveled 50 miles or more to attend the Fair.

Information sources

The most frequently identified information source was word of mouth (42.9 percent), followed by "other" (27.6 percent), newspaper (16.4 percent), Irish Fair webpage (12.2 percent), and TV (11.8 percent). The least used information sources were Internet-based: Vita.MN (0.6 percent), Foursquare (0.2 percent), and Twitter (0.2 percent). Use of information sources did not differ between first-time and repeat attendees, nor did it differ among age groups.

Fair experience

A majority of respondents were repeat attendees (72 percent). On average, repeat attendees had previously attended the Irish Fair six times, most often as recently as 2013 (71 percent). On average, attendees spent close to six hours at the Fair and came for a variety of reasons. The most frequently cited were "to celebrate my Irish heritage" (22 percent), "I am/know someone performing" (20 percent), and "live music" (14 percent). Attendees most frequently identified live music (52 percent), dance stage (20 percent), and food and beverage (seven percent) as the most enjoyable attributes of the Fair. More than 85 percent of respondents were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their Irish Fair experience.

Fair expenditures

Most respondents spent money on food and beverage (76 percent; *M*=\$35.6, *Mdn*=\$26.0) and parking (53 percent; *M*=\$10.0, *Mdn*=\$10.0). With the exception of the few attendees who spent money on lodging, attendees reported spending the most at the Marketplace (*M*=\$78.5, *Mdn*=\$50.0).

Willingness to pay

Nearly 60 percent of respondents expressed a willingness to pay a potential admission charge, whereas 38 percent were not willing to pay. Of those willing to pay, the median amount was five dollars with a range of \$1 to \$500.

Transportation and willing to travel

Automobiles (car, van, or truck; 83 percent) were the most frequently used mode of transportation to get to the Fair. Eleven percent of attendees used public transportation, three percent arrived on foot, and two percent rode their bicycles. Most respondents were willing to travel 11 to 20 miles to attend the Fair.

DISCUSSION

The 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attracted many repeat attendees and offered a variety of enjoyable attributes. Additionally, attendees were as satisfied with their Fair experience in 2014 as in 2011. The variety of offerings at the Irish Fair has continued to attract attendees, as in 2007 and 2011. The popularity of live music, a dance stage, and food and beverage indicates that highlighting the authentic offerings of Irish music, dance, food, and beverage in future marketing efforts may be worthwhile. It is equally important to maintain these offerings and sustain high quality.

For the average amount of admission charge that respondents were willing to pay, there was a one dollar increase from 2011 to 2014, which seems to be encouraging. However, the share of respondents who were not willing to pay an admission charge increased from 14 percent in 2011 to 38 percent in 2014. Additionally, nine percent of respondents cited "affordable/no entry fee" as the main reason to attend the Fair. Therefore, it is likely that charging an admission fee would negatively affect attendance level.

Most attendees traveled no more than 25 miles to attend the Fair, a pattern that aligns with the finding that most respondents were not willing to travel more than 30 miles to attend the Fair. While at the Fair, respondents, on average, spent the most on souvenirs, as in both 2007 and 2011, followed by food and beverage, as in 2011. Clearly, providing uniquely Irish merchandises, as well as food and beverage at the Fair continues to be the key to attract attendee spending. Meanwhile, the average amount of money spent on souvenirs was lower in 2011 and 2014 than in 2007. The trend may be explained by the 2008 recession and the subsequent slow recovery.

In terms of information sources, the continuing importance of word of mouth indicates that Fair organizers should plan and execute marketing efforts early, in order to allow ample time for information to be disseminated through social groups and personal networks. Regarding the low frequency of using social media, it is possible that attendees use social media mainly for sharing and commenting on their Fair experience *after* attending the Fair, rather than for gathering information about the Fair *before* attending it. The decrease in using newspaper and radio as information sources was not particularly surprising, and festival organizers seemed to have realized such trends, as the frequency of using traditional media outlets to market festivals and events decreased in the past 25 years (Qian & Simmons, 2014).

Findings from this survey, along with comparisons to those from 2007 and 2011, should help maintain the Fair's popularity and enhance attendees' experience in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Festivals and events have a direct impact on residents who may develop a stronger sense of community, find more pride for local culture, and enjoy local entertainment by attending festivals and events (Hall, 1992; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). In fact, more than 60 percent of festivals and events in Minnesota identified developing a sense of community as a purpose (Qian & Simmons, 2014). Festivals and events can also catalyze community development by enhancing exposure, awareness, and image of the host community (Felenstein & Fleischer, 2003).

One such event is the Irish Fair of Minnesota. Located at Harriet Island Regional Park since 2001, the Fair aims to provide attendees with a fun, authentically-Irish, and family-friendly event. To assist marketing decisions, to enhance the event itself, and to maximize benefits to the community, the Irish Fair of Minnesota has continually assessed and evaluated the event and its market by conducting a visitor profile survey.

In July 2014, the University of Minnesota Tourism Center was contracted to profile attendees to the 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota. The 2014 questionnaire was the third such profile of Irish Fair attendees conducted in an 8-year span (the previous two surveys were conducted during the 2007 and 2011 events). Of key interests were attendee demographics, information sources for the Fair, Fair experience, expenditures, and willingness to pay a potential admission charge. Analysis to compare data from the three surveys was also conducted.

METHODOLOGY

STUDY SETTING

The 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota was held Thursday, August 8 through Sunday, August 10 at Harriet Island Regional Park in downtown Saint Paul, MN. Activities offered at the Fair ranged from live music, Irish dancing, and a marketplace to cultural areas, Irish-themed children activities, and a sports area, among others. According to Fair organizers, the event attracts approximately 100,000 attendees.

QUESTIONNAIRE

An onsite questionnaire was developed based on previous Irish Fair attendee profile projects (Oftedal & Schneider, 2011) and with the assistance of Fair organizers. Questionnaire sections included event participation, information sources, enjoyable attributes of the Fair, main reasons to attend the Fair, group composition, expenditures, mode of transportation, thoughts on a potential admission charge, distance willing to travel to attend the Fair, and basic demographic information (Appendix A).

DATA COLLECTION

A sampling plan was created with both spatial and time consideration to: (1) ensure coverage of various activities and areas throughout the Fair, and (2) reach the range of Fair attendees. A convenience sampling approach was implemented, as data collection volunteers asked passing attendees to complete the questionnaire. University of Minnesota Tourism Center staff trained and coordinated volunteers who administered the questionnaire.

Based on estimated attendance from previous years, 383 completed questionnaires were set as the sampling target (95 percent confidence internal; ±5 percent sampling error rate).

RESPONSE RATE

During three days of data collection, volunteers contacted 587 parties and obtained 479 questionnaires, resulting in an 82% compliance rate (Table 1). Four questionnaires were unusable (two completed by attendees younger than 18 years old, another two duplicates from the same families), thus 475 questionnaires were used for analysis. Close to half of respondents (44 percent) were contacted on Sunday, 37 percent on Saturday and 19 percent on Friday (Figure 1). Among those who refused to complete the questionnaire, lack of interest was the most frequently specified reason (58 percent), followed by "in a hurry" (20 percent).

ANALYSIS

Completed questionnaires were entered, cleaned, and checked in SPSS (version 22.0), a statistical data analysis software. Analysis provided frequencies to describe the sample of Fair attendees and to provide information on variables of interests. Means, medians, and standard deviations were also provided where applicable. Comparison between the 2007, 2011 and 2014 profile results was conducted using chi-square tests to compare categorical variables and t-tests to compare means.

-	Frequency (n)				
	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Overall	
People contacted	110	220	257	587	
Declined to participate	19	46	43	108	
Gender:					
Female	7	26	21	54	
Male	12	20	22	54	
Reason given:					
Lack of interest	9	30	24	63	
In a hurry	5	7	10	22	
Other	3	7	4	14	
Already completed	2	2	3	7	
Too hot	0	0	2	2	
English as second language	0	0	0	0	
Compliance rate	83%	79%	83%	82%	

TABLE 1: Response rate to questionnaire among 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees.

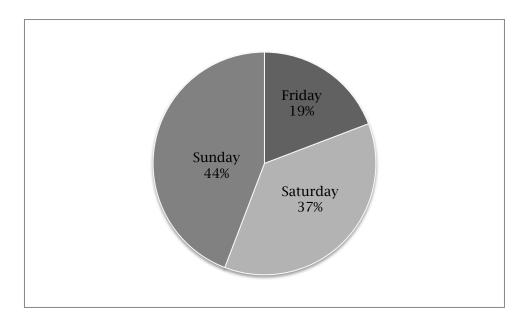


Fig. 1: Day of week respondents completed 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota questionnaire (n=475).

RESULTS

RESPONDENTS

Demographics

More than 60 percent of respondents were female, and attendees' average age was 47 years old (*M*=47, *Mdn*=47, *SD*=15; Table 2; Figure 2). The majority of respondents were white (88.2 percent) and from non-Hispanic/Latino backgrounds (97.4 percent). Close to two-thirds (66.2 percent) of respondents were of Irish descent. The most frequently reported an annual pre-tax household income between \$50,000 and \$99,999 (Figure 3).

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	281	62.6
Male	168	37.4
Total	449	100.0
Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic/Latino	382	97.4
Hispanic/Latino	10	2.6
Total	492	100.0
Total	132	100.0
Race		
White	419	88.2
Other	25	5.3
Asian	11	2.3
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	1.5
Black or African American	3	0.6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	0.6
Total ¹		
Irish heritage		
Yes	309	66.2
No	158	33.8
Total	467	100.0

¹Not applicable due to possible selection of multiple racial categories.

TABLE 2: Demographic characteristics of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees.

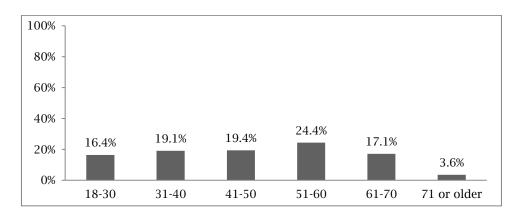


Fig. 2: Percentage of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees in various age brackets (n=439).

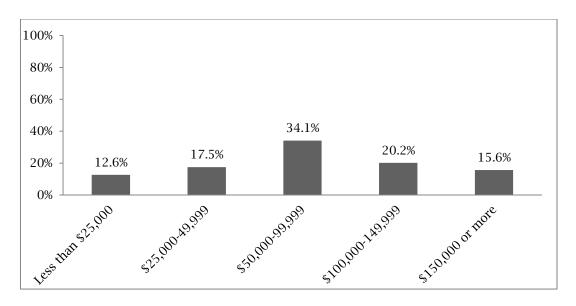


Fig. 3: Percentage of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees in pre-tax income groups (n=405).

Primary residence

Most respondents (87 percent) resided in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area, as indicated by a centroid analysis of zip codes of respondents' primary residence (Figure 4). Forty-four percent of respondents' primary residence was within 10 miles from Harriet Island Regional Park, and another 36 percent lived between 11 and 25 miles. About 13 percent of respondents lived 50 or more miles from Harriet Island Regional Park.

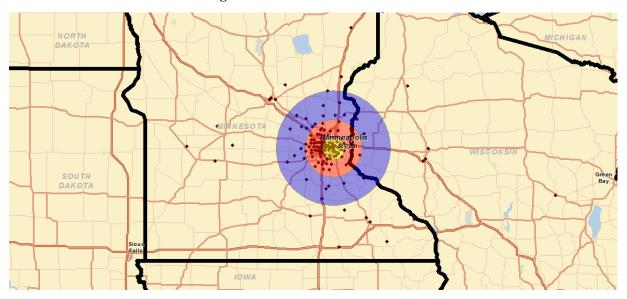


Fig. 4: Regional map illustrating 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees' primary residences (n=467).

REPEAT AND FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

The majority of respondents (72 percent) were repeat visitors. On average, repeat attendees visited the Irish Fair of Minnesota six times (*M*=6.3, *Mdn*=5, *SD*=5.9), most often as recently as 2013 (71 percent).

INFORMATION SOURCES

Respondents were most likely to hear about the 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota through word of mouth (42.9 percent; Figure 5). The second most frequently reported information source was "other" (27.6 percent), followed by newspaper (16.4 percent), Irish Fair webpage (12.2 percent), and TV (11.8 percent). Between five and ten percent of respondents heard about the Fair through Facebook (9.5 percent), Pioneer Press ad (7.6 percent), Irish bar/restaurant (7.2 percent), and radio (5.9 percent). Respondents were less likely to hear about the Fair through *Irish Gazette* (4.4 percent), poster/flyer (3.8 percent), and a variety of Internet sources (Vita.MN, 0.6 percent; Foursquare, 0.2 percent; Twitter, 0.2 percent).

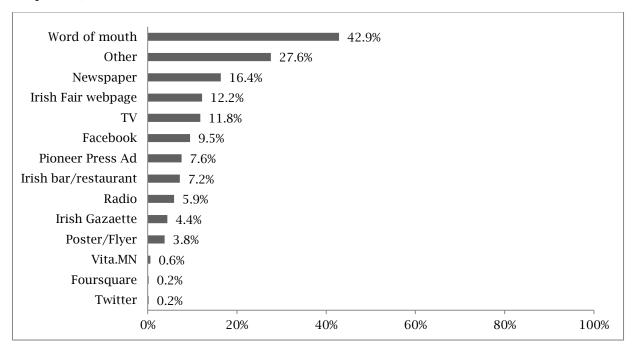


Fig. 5: Percentage of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees using select information sources (n=475).

Neither previous visit nor age differentiated information sources used (Tables 3 and 4). For both repeat and first-time attendees, the three most frequently used information sources were word of mouth, "other", and newspaper (Table 3). The three least frequently used information sources were Vita.MN, Twitter, and Foursquare.

	Percentage (%)	using source	Sta	itistics
Information source	Repeat attendee (n=342)	1st-time attendee (n=129)	χ^2	Sig.
Word of Mouth	43.9%	40.3%	0.89	0.639
Other	27.5%	27.1%	0.01	1.000
Newspaper	16.7%	16.3%	0.01	1.000
Irish Fair webpage	13.7%	8.5%	2.36	0.157
TV	12.6%	10.1%	0.56	0.525
Facebook	9.9%	7.8%	0.53	0.595
Irish bar/restaurant¹	8.5%	3.1%		
Pioneer Press Ad	7.6%	7.8%	0.00	1.000
Radio	6.1%	5.4%	0.08	1.000
Irish Gazette¹	5.6%	1.6%		
Poster/Flyer	3.5%	4.7%	0.33	0.593
Vita.MN ¹	0.6%	0.8%		
Twitter ¹	0.3%	0.0%		
Foursquare ¹	0.3%	0.0%		

¹Response too low for statistical comparison.

TABLE 3: Comparison of information sources used by repeat and first-time attendees to 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=471).

Age did not differentiate information sources used (Table 4). Across all age groups, the two most frequently used information sources were word of mouth and "other," and the two least used information sources were Twitter and Foursquare.

	Percen	tage (%) of	ource	Sta	ntistics			
Information source	18-30 (n=72)	31-40 (n=84)	41-50 (n=85)	51-60 (n=107)	61+ (n=91)	χ^2	Sig.	
Word of mouth	47.2	47.6	36.5	46.7	39.6	7.66	0.467	
Other	34.7	27.4	31.8	24.3	23.1	4.06	0.398	
Facebook	12.5	10.7	12.9	7.5	6.6	3.33	0.503	
Newspaper ¹	9.7	4.8	11.8	18.7	27.5			
Irish bar/restaurant¹	6.9	6.0	11.8	7.5	4.4			
Irish Fair webpage	6.9	19.0	12.9	15.9	8.8	7.27	0.122	
Poster/Flyer ¹	6.9	2.4	5.9	2.8	2.2			
Pioneer Press ad¹	2.8	2.4	7.1	8.4	16.5			
Radio ¹	2.8	4.8	8.2	8.4	3.3			
Irish Gazette¹	1.4	1.2	7.1	6.5	5.5			
$\mathrm{T}\mathrm{V}^{\scriptscriptstyle 1}$	1.4	10.7	15.3	13.1	15.4			
Vita.MN¹	1.4	0.0	1.2	0.9	0.0			
Twitter ¹	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0			
Foursquare ¹	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0			

¹Response too low for statistical comparison.

TABLE 4: Comparison of information sources used across age brackets (n=439).

IRISH FAIR EXPERIENCE

Time and duration of visit

The majority of respondents reported attending the Irish Fair of Minnesota on Saturday (58.5 percent), followed closely by Sunday (54.5 percent; Figure 6). About 35 percent of respondents attended the Fair on Friday, and only about three percent attended the Fair on Thursday. Note that the almost even distribution of days attended may be partially due to the high percentage of respondents contacted on Sunday.

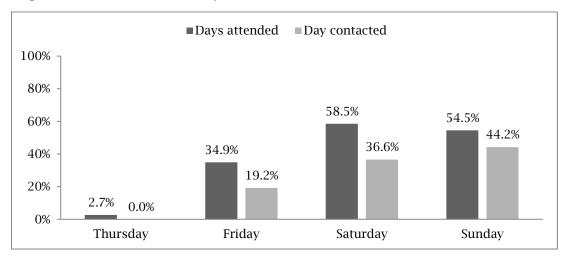


Fig. 6: Attendance and contact day of attendees to 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=475).

On average, respondents spent close to six hours (*M*=5.87, *Mdn*=5, *SD*=4.42) at the Fair, with a range of one to 30 hours. Those with a response of longer than 32 hours were excluded from analysis, as the entire Fair schedule included 32 hours of activities across the three Fair days. Close to 37 percent of respondents stayed 3-4 hours at the Fair (Figure 7).

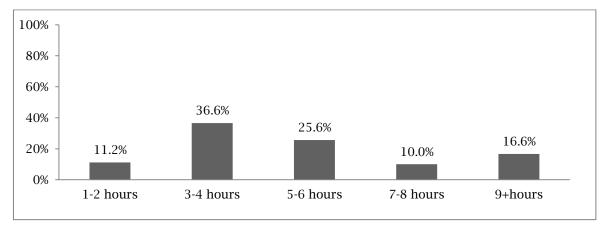


Fig. 7: Length of stay at 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=429).

Purpose of attending

The most frequently reported reason to attend the Fair among the 11 queried was "to celebrate my Irish heritage" (22 percent; Figure 8). Four other frequently selected reasons included "I am/know someone performing" (20 percent), "live music" (14 percent), "other" (13 percent), and

"recommended by family/friend" (10 percent). Few respondents chose pub experience, food and beverage, children's activities, or buying Irish merchandise as a main reason to attend the Irish Fair of Minnesota.

The main reason to attend the Fair differed by day (Table 5). Respondents on Saturday, compared to those on Friday or Sunday, were more likely to report "I am/know someone performing" as the main reason to attend (χ^2 =8.71, p<0.05). Respondents on Sunday were more likely than those on Friday or Saturday to report live music as the main reason to attend (χ^2 =6.52, p<0.05).

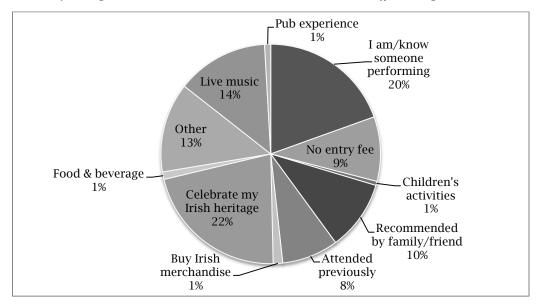


Fig. 8: Main reason to attend 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=348).

	Percent	Sta	atistics			
Reason	Friday (n=69)	Saturday (n=131)	Sunday (n=148)	χ^2	Sig.	
Children's activities ¹	50.0%	0%	50.0%			
I am/know someone performing	29.4%	42.6%	27.9%	8.71	0.013	*
Recommended by family/friend	25.0%	44.4%	30.6%	2.39	0.303	
No entry fee	21.2%	27.3%	51.5%	1.77	0.413	
Buy Irish merchandise¹	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%			
Celebrate my Irish heritage	18.7%	41.3%	40.0%	0.55	0.758	
Other	17.4%	32.6%	50.0%	1.21	0.546	
Live music	12.8%	27.7%	59.6%	6.52	0.038	*
Attended previously ¹	10.3%	44.8%	44.8%			
Food & beverage ¹	0%	75.0%	25.0%			
Pub experience ¹	0%	33.3%	66.7%			

¹Response too low for statistical comparison.

TABLE 5: Comparison of main reason to attend 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota by day (n=348).

^{*}p<0.05.

Most enjoyable attributes

Among the 12 Fair attributes possibly most enjoyed by respondents, the most frequently reported was live music (52 percent; Figure 9). Other most enjoyed attributes included the dance stage (20 percent) and food and beverage (seven percent). Four attributes were each selected by two percent of respondents as most enjoyable: pub experience, Mass, children's activities, and sports area. No respondent reported "run" as the most enjoyable attribute.

What was reported as the most enjoyable attribute of the Fair differed significantly by day (Table 6). Specifically, respondents on Friday and Saturday, compared to those on Sunday, were more likely to report the dance stage as the most enjoyable attribute of the Fair ($\chi^2=11.36$, p<0.005).

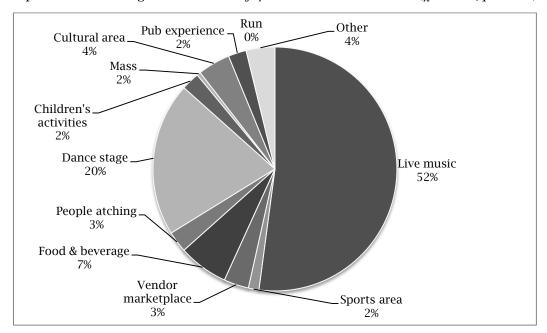


Fig. 9: Most enjoyable attributes of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=211).

_	Percenta	Sta	atistics			
Attribute	Friday (n=43)	Saturday (n=71)	Sunday (n=96)	χ^2	Sig.	
Live music	17.3%	32.7%	50.0%	1.96	0.376	
Sports area ¹	33.3%	0%	66.7%			
Children's activities ¹	0%	80.0%	20.0%			
Vendor marketplace ¹	28.6%	28.6%	42.9%			
Food & beverage ¹	21.4%	28.6%	50.0%			
People watching ¹	16.7%	16.7%	66.7%			
Dance stage	37.2%	34.9%	27.9%	11.36	0.003	*
Cultural area ¹	0%	22.2%	77.8%			
Pub experience	20.0%	80.0%	0%			
Other¹	0%	37.5%	62.5%			

¹Response too low for statistical comparison.

TABLE 6: Comparison of the most enjoyable attributes of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota by day (n=211).

^{*}*p*<0.005.

Satisfaction with the Irish Fair of Minnesota

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the Irish Fair of Minnesota experience: more than 60 percent of respondents were "very satisfied" with the Fair, and more than 25 percent were "satisfied" (Figure 10). Only 0.2 percent of respondents were "dissatisfied" with the Fair, and 11.5 percent were "very dissatisfied."

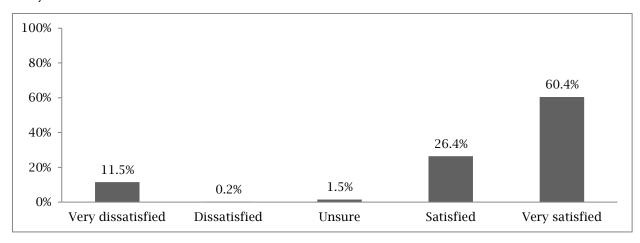


Fig. 10: Satisfaction reported by attendees to 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=470).

Transportation and willingness to travel

The most frequently used mode of transportation to get to the 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota was automobiles, as 8 out of 10 respondents arrived at the Fair by a car, van, or truck (83 percent; Figure 11). Eleven percent of respondents got to the Fair by public transportation. The other three modes of transportation assessed—on foot, bicycle, and motorcycle—were each used by no more than three percent of respondents.

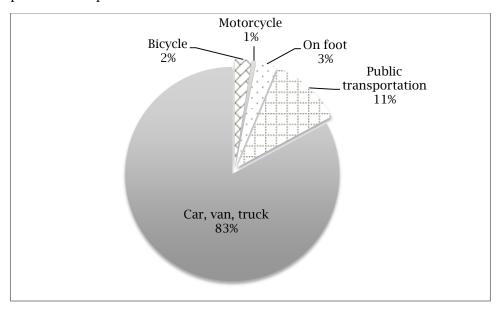


Fig. 11: Modes of transportation used by attendees to 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=471).

Most respondents were willing to travel 11 to 20 miles to attend the Irish Fair of Minnesota (29 percent; Figure 12). Twenty two percent of respondents were willing to travel no more than ten miles to attend the Fair, and another 22 percent were willing to travel 21 to 30 miles. More than 23 percent of respondents were willing to travel more than 40 miles to attend the Fair. In fact, 5.6 percent were willing to travel more than 100 miles. Among all those who answered the question about distance willing to travel, the average number of miles was 58, with a median of 20 and a large variation (SD=223), due to the presence of those willing to travel more than 100 miles. Among those who were willing to travel no more than 100 miles, the average number of miles was 28, with a median of 20 and much smaller variation (SD=23).

	Miles willing to travel to attend Irish Fair of Minnesota, all responses included (n=444)	Miles willing to travel to attend Irish Fair of Minnesota, excluding those willing to travel for more than 100 miles (n=419)
Mean	58	28
Median	20	20
Standard deviation	223	23

TABLE 7: Distance willing to travel to attend Irish Fair of Minnesota.

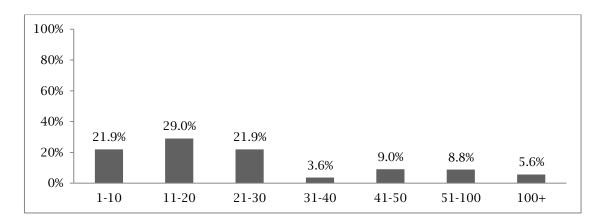


Fig. 12: Distribution of distance willing to travel to attend 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=444).

GROUP COMPOSITION

More than 45 percent of respondents had members younger than 18 years old in their groups (Figure 13). Specifically, 36 percent had at least one child under the age of 12, and nine percent had at least one child between the ages of 13 and 17. Forty eight percent of respondent had at least one adult aged 41-59 years in their groups, and 30 percent had at least one person over the age of 60 in the group.

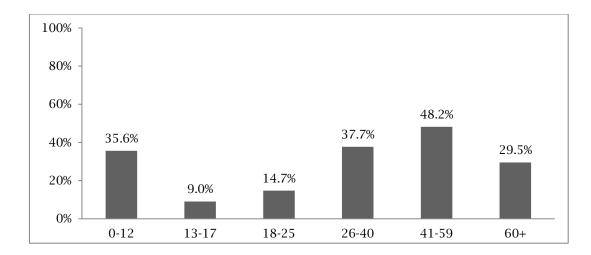


Fig. 13: Percentage of groups attending 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota containing selected age groups (n=475).

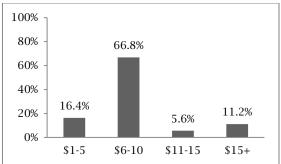
EXPENDITURES

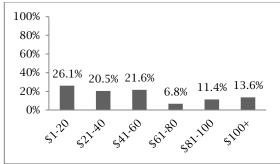
Respondents spent money on a variety of categories while attending the 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (Table 8; Figure 14). Seventy six percent of respondents paid for food and beverage and 53 percent paid for parking. More than 15 percent of respondents spent money in the Marketplace (18 percent) and on souvenirs (16 percent). Few respondents paid for off-site food and beverage (six percent), other expenditures (six percent), or lodging (two percent).

	Spent a \$1.0		Descriptive statistics of respondents spending at least \$1.00		
Spending categories	Yes	No	Mean (\$)	Median (\$)	S.D.
Food & beverage	76%	24%	35.6	26.0	30.6
Parking	53%	47%	10.9	10.0	5.4
Marketplace	18%	82%	78.5	50.0	130.1
Souvenirs	16%	84%	42.7	25.0	41.7
Off-site food & beverage	6%	94%	44.7	25.0	59.4
Other	6%	94%	55.1	20.0	127.7
Lodging	2%	98%	232.6	275.0	190.5

TABLE 8: Attendee expenditures at 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota (n=475).

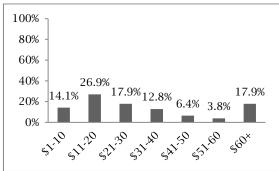
Although only two percent of respondents spent money on lodging, the few who did spent a median of \$275 (*M*=232.6, *Mdn*=274, *SD*=190.5). Beyond lodging, the highest median expenditure was \$50 at the Marketplace (*M*=78.5, *Mdn*=50, *SD*=130.1). Respondents also spent a median of about \$25 on each of the following three categories: food and beverage, souvenirs, and off-site food and beverage.

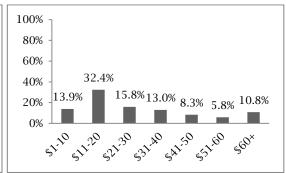




Money spent on Parking (n=250)

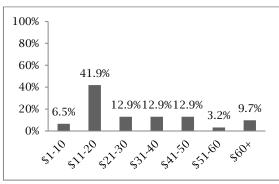
Money spent on Marketplace (n=88)

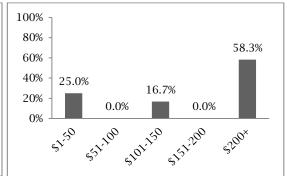




Money spent on Souvenirs (n=78)

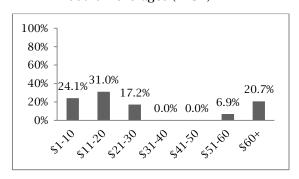
Money spent on Food & Beverages (n=361)





Money spent on off-site Food & Beverages (n=31)

Money spent on Lodging (n=12)



Money spent on "Other" (n=29)

Fig. 14: Spending on select categories among attendees of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota.

POTENTIAL ADMISSION CHARGE

Close to 60 percent of respondents were willing to pay an admission charge to attend the Irish Fair of Minnesota (Figure 15). Specifically, 36.6 percent were willing to pay \$1 to \$5, 14.1 percent were willing to pay \$6 to \$10, and 3 percent were willing to pay more than \$10. On average, respondents were willing to \$10 for admission, with a median of \$5 and a large variation (*SD*=43.8), due to the presence of two respondents willing to pay \$500. Excluding these two respondents, the average amount that respondents were willing to pay for admission was \$6.8, with a median of \$5 and much smaller variation (*SD*=4.1). There were also 38 percent of respondents who were not willing to pay an admission charge. Approximately three percent of respondents did not answer the question.

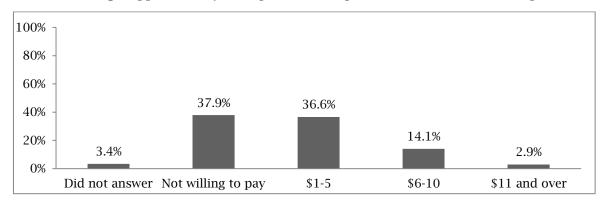


Fig. 15: Range of admission charges 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees willing to pay (n=475).

	Amount of admission charge willing to pay, all responses included (n=255)	Amount of admission charge willing to pay, excluding the two willing to pay \$500 (n=253)
Mean	10.6	6.8
Median	5.0	5.0
Standard deviation	43.8	4.1

TABLE 9: Admission charge willing to pay to attend the Irish Fair of Minnesota.

COMPARISON OF 2007, 2011, AND 2014 RESPONDENTS

Original data from the 2007 and 2011 profiles were compared with 2014 data, where questions were similar. Analysis revealed differences in select information sources, average age, gender, income, Fair experience, select expenditure, and amount of admission charges willing to pay.

Differences in information sources mainly lie in traditional media use (Table 10). In 2007, attendees were more likely to use newspaper (χ^2 =98.22, p<0.0005) and radio (χ^2 =13.23, p<0.001), two traditional information sources, than in 2011 and 2014. In 2007, 41 percent of attendees used newspaper and 12 percent used radio. In 2011 and 2014, around 16 percent of attendees used newspaper and only about 6 percent used radio. Additionally, attendees in both 2011 and 2014, compared to those in 2007, were more likely to use "other" information sources (χ^2 =36.76, p<0.0005). Across the three years, use of Irish community information sources, word of mouth, TV and poster/flyer remained stable. There was little change in using online information sources from 2011 to 2014.

	2007 (%)	2011 (%)	2014 (%)	Statisti	cs	
	(n=395)	(n=532)	(n=475)	χ^2	Sig.	
Irish community						
Irish Bar/Restaurant	8.1	9.8	7.2	2.30	0.317	
Irish Gazette	NA	5.8	4.4	1.01	0.314	
Word of mouth	NA	46.6	42.9	2.42	0.298	
Traditional media						
Newspaper	41.0	16.0	16.4	98.22	0.000	**
Pioneer Press Ad	9.9	8.5	7.6	1.46	0.481	
TV	11.9	8.3	11.8	4.48	0.106	
Radio	12.2	6.8	5.9	13.23	0.001	*
Poster/flyer	4.3	5.3	3.8	1.32	0.518	
Online						
Irish Fair webpage	NA	11.3	12.2	0.21	0.646	
$Vita.MN^1$	NA	1.3	0.6			
Facebook	NA	6.6	9.5	2.87	0.090	
Twitter ¹	NA	0.6	0.2			
Four Square ¹	NA	0.6	0.2			
Other	11.6	25.6	27.6	36.76	0.000	**

¹Response too low for statistical comparison. $p \le .01$, ** $p \le .001$.

TABLE 10: Comparison of 2007, 2011, and 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendee information sources.

Attendees across the three years differed in average age, gender composition, and income (Table 11). The 2011 Irish Fair respondents were significantly younger than the 2007 and the 2014 Fairs (F=8.19, p<0.0005). Attendees' average age was 43 years old in 2011 and 47 years old in both 2007 and 2014. However, given the respondents are within the same decade, the meaningfulness of this difference is in question. In 2014, more females answered the questionnaire than in 2007 and 2011 (χ^2 =8.89, p<0.05). Distribution of attendees in various income categories also differed across the three surveys. There was a higher percentage of attendees in the lowest income categories in 2011 and 2014 than in 2007. Meanwhile, compared to 2007 and 2011, a greater percentage of 2014 attendees were in the highest income category.

	2007	2011	2014	Statist	ics	
_	2007	2011	2014	F	Sig.	
Age						
Sample size (n)	335	483	439	8.19	0.000	***
Mean (years)	47.13 _a	43.38_{ab}	46.82 _b	0.19	0.000	
				χ²	Sig	
Gender				,,,		
Sample size (n)	389	501	449			
Female (%)	56.3	53.1	62.6	8.89	0.012	*
Male (%)	43.7	46.9	37.4			
Income						
Sample size (n)	329	427	405			
Less than \$25,000 (%)	8.8	15.2	12.6			
\$25,000-49,999 (%)	23.4	19.4	17.5	25.25	0.001	**
\$50,000-99,999 (%)	35.3	36.5	34.1	25.25	0.001	жж
\$100,000-149,999 (%)	22.5	22.0	20.2			
\$150,000 or more (%)	10.0	6.8	15.6			
Irish heritage						
Sample size (n)	386	515	467	1.62	0.445	
Yes (%)	65.8	69.3	66.2	1.02	0.445	
Ethnicity						
Sample size (n)	364	445	392			
Non-Hispanic/Latino (%)	97.8	97.5	97.4	0.11	0.947	
Hispanic/Latino (%)	2.2	2.5	2.6			
Race						
Sample size (n)	395	532	475			
White (%)	89.6	89.1	88.2	0.46	0.796	
Other (%)	2.5	4.3	5.3	4.13	0.127	
Asian (%)	1.5	1.3	2.3	1.61	0.446	
American Indian or Alaska Native (%)¹	1.3	0.9	1.5			
Black or African American (%)	2.0	1.3	0.6	3.31	0.191	

Note: Means with pairing subscripts within the row are significantly different at the p<0.0005 based on Bonferroni post hoc paired comparisons.

TABLE 11: Comparison of 2007, 2011, and 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendee demographics.

¹Response too low for statistical comparison.

^{*} $p \le .05$, ** $p \le .005$.

Comparisons of attendees' expenditures and the amount of an admission charge willing to pay yielded additional differences (Table 12). In terms of expenditures, attendees spent more money on souvenirs in 2007 than in 2014 (F=3.61, p<0.05). In 2007, the average amount spent on souvenirs was close to \$51, whereas in 2014, the average was \$36. In both 2011 and 2014, attendees spent more money on parking than in 2007 (F=16.65, p<0.0005). Attendees spent, on average, seven dollars on parking in 2007, but in the two most recent years, the average amount spent on parking was close to ten dollars. Differences also existed in the amount of admission charges that attendees would be willing to pay for (F=6.81, p<0.005). In 2014, attendees were willing to pay an average of seven dollars for admission charges, whereas in 2011, the average was close to six dollars.

	2	007	2	011	2	2014	Statis	tics	
	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	F	Sig.	
Attendee experience Hours spent at	376	5.45	461	5.39	429	5.87	1.43	0.239	
Irish Fair Satisfaction	NA	NA	522	4.33	470	4.24	1.36	0.243	
Average expenditures (\$)									
Other	32	51.13	33	24.94	49	32.63	0.99	0.373	
Souvenirs	143	50.87	159	39.91	92	36.17	3.61	0.042	*
Food & Beverages	251	31.78	410	34.13	364	35.33	1.25	0.286	
Parking	242	7.29_{ab}	287	9.71	284	9.57,	16.65	0.000	***
Off-site food & beverage	NA	NA	25	37.56	52	26.63	0.97	0.327	
Lodging	NA	NA	10	169.90	32	87.22	2.34	0.134	
Amount of admission charge willing to pay ¹	NA	NA	369	5.96	253	6.79	6.81	0.009	**

Note: Means with pairing subscripts within the row are significantly different at the p<0.0005 based on Bonferroni post hoc paired comparisons.

TABLE 12: Comparison of 2007, 2011, and 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendee experience, expenditures, and amount of admission charge willing to pay.

¹Two outliers in the 2014 survey were excluded from analysis.

^{*} $p \le .05$, ** $p \le .005$, *** $p \le .001$.

DISCUSSION

An onsite questionnaire of 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendees revealed the Fair is a family-friendly and intergenerational event that attracted groups of attendees in various age categories. It also appears the Fair has had long-lasting appeal, as more than 70 percent of respondents were repeat attendees who had been to the Fair for an average of six times prior to 2014. Furthermore, the Fair has continued to attract its primary market, considering about two-thirds of respondents are of Irish descent, as was the case in both 2007 and 2011. While the ethnic and racial composition of attendees remained unchanged across the three survey years, there were changes in respondents' household income level. The increase in the percentages of respondents in both the lowest and highest income categories may reflect a broader societal trend in terms of household income change (Huber & Stephens, 2013). As in 2011, the majority of Fair attendees are local residents who traveled no more than 25 miles to attend the Fair. The pattern corresponds with the finding that most respondents were not willing to travel for more than 30 miles to attend the Fair.

While the volume of repeat attendees indicates people will continue to attend the Fair, the effect of a possible admission charge on attendance level remains of interest. In 2014, close to 60 percent of respondents were willing to pay an average of about seven dollars to attend the Fair. Although it seems encouraging that there was a one dollar increase from 2011 to 2014 in the average amount of admission charge respondents were willing to pay, the increase in the percentage of respondents *unwilling* to pay an admission charge shows the appeal of a free event cannot be ignored. Indeed, nine percent of respondents cited "affordable/no entry fee" as the main reason to attend the Fair. Therefore, it is likely that charging an admission fee would have a negative effect on attendance level, at least slightly. Continuous tracking of attendees' willingness to pay for an admission charge will shed more light in this regard.

The variety of offerings at the Irish Fair has continued to attract attendees, as in 2007 and 2011. Celebrating one's Irish heritage is the most frequently cited reason to attend the Fair, which is not surprising, given two-thirds of respondents were of Irish descent. Live music and a dance stage not only were the two most enjoyable attributes of the Fair but also seemed to be great draws, as 20 percent of respondents cited "I am/know someone performing" and another 14 percent cited "live music" as the main reason to attend the Fair. While only one percent of respondents cited food and beverage as the most enjoyable attribute of the Fair. Given the popularity of live music, a dance stage, and food and beverage, it may be worthwhile to highlight the authentic offerings of Irish music, dance, food, and beverage in future marketing efforts. It is equally important to maintain these offerings and sustain their high quality.

When comparing respondents across Fair days, it became clear that a higher percentage of Sunday attendees came to the Fair for the live music and that a higher percentage of Sunday attendees enjoyed live music the most. In other words, many Sunday attendees got what they had looked for at the Fair. Such "in sync" findings is encouraging, particularly in terms of attendees' level of satisfaction with their Fair experience. Indeed, attendees were just as satisfied with their Fair experience in 2014 as in 2011. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that 11.5 percent of 2014 respondents were "very dissatisfied" with the Fair, almost double the percentage of 2011 respondents. One possible explanation is that 2014 respondents did not read the questionnaire closely enough and thought the first option to answer the question was "very satisfied." If there are indeed at least 10 percent of respondents feeling very dissatisfied with their Fair experience, future survey needs to ask for reasons and seek ways to make improvements.

There are a wide range of sources from which people can hear about the 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota. Although the festival and event sector frequently utilizes various Internet-based tools to disseminate information (Qian & Simmons, 2014), word of mouth still serves as the key information source for the Irish Fair, trumping both traditional and new media platforms, as it did in 2011. Given the unwavering importance of word of mouth across age groups and for first-time and repeat attendees alike, Fair organizers should plan and execute marketing efforts early. Doing so will allow ample time for information to "sink in" and be disseminated through social groups and personal networks. The comparatively low frequency of using social media stayed the same from 2011 to 2014. The finding does not necessarily demonstrate the unimportance of social media. Rather, it is possible that attendees use social media mainly for sharing and commenting on their Fair experience *after* attending the Fair, rather than for gathering information about the Fair *before* attending. Future research may ask respondents what communication outlets (social media included) they plan to use to share their Fair experience.

While at the Fair, respondents on average spent the most on souvenirs, as in both 2007 and 2011, followed by food and beverage, as in 2011. Clearly, providing uniquely Irish merchandise, as well as food and beverage at the Fair continues to be the key to attract attendee spending. Meanwhile, the average amount of money spent on souvenirs was lower in 2011 and 2014 than in 2007. The trend may be explained by the 2008 recession and the subsequent slow recovery.

Given neither age group nor previous attendance differentiated information source use, target marketing by age or previous Fair experience may not be a priority for Fair organizers, at least for now. Meanwhile, given that the sample size for some sub-samples was not sufficient enough to perform statistical comparisons, it is possible that differences would emerge with greater volume of data. Over time, there was a decrease in the percentages of respondents using newspaper and radio, two traditional media outlets, as information sources. The finding is not particularly surprising, and festival organizers seemed to have realized such trends, as the frequency of using traditional media outlets to market festivals and events decreased in the past 25 years (Qian & Simmons, 2014).

Regarding modes of transportation, while the automobile was still the most frequently used mode of transportation, there was a six percentage point decrease from 2011 to 2014 in the amount of respondents using automobiles. At the same time, there was an eight percentage point increase from 2011 to 2014 in the amount of respondents using public transportation. It is likely that the availability of complimentary public transit pass on Fair days and the shuttle services from the nearby Union Depot encouraged more attendees to use public transportation, rather than driving their own vehicles. It is also possible the increase in parking expense over the years has discouraged at least some attendees from driving their own vehicles to attend the Fair.

In summary, the 2014 Irish Fair of Minnesota attendee survey suggests that attendees enjoyed their Fair experience. The high percentage of repeat attendees, the high level of satisfaction, and the identification of enjoyable attributes at the Fair were all encouraging. Findings from this survey, along with comparisons to those from 2007 and 2011, should help maintain the Fair's popularity and enhance attendees' experience in the future.

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APPENDIX A

2014 Irish Fair Survey

Have you been to the Irish Fair before? (Check ONE) If yes, how many years have you attended the Irish Fair? What was the last year you attended the Irish Fair? — # of years — # of years
Where did you hear about the Irish Fair? (Check all that apply) Irish Bar/Restaurant
About how long do you intend to be at the Irish Fair? hours
Which day(s) did you attend or plan to attend the Irish Fair? (Check all that apply) Thu Kickoff Party (08/07) Fri (08/08) Sat (08/09) Sun (08/10)
What do you enjoy most about the Irish Fair? (Check ONE) Live music Children's activities Food & beverages Dance stage Cultural area Run Sports area Vendor marketplace People watching Mass Pub experience Other:
Please choose your main reason for coming to the Irish Fair (Check ONE): I am/know someone performing Recommended Family/Friend _Celebrate my Irish heritage Live Music Affordable/No entry fee _Attended previously _Food & Beverages Pub experience Children's activities _Buy Irish merchandise _Other (specify):
How many are in your group are (Specify number in each age category):0-12 years13-17 years18-25 years26-40 years41-59 years60+ years
How much did YOU spend during your time at the Irish Fair? \$ Parking
How did you get to the Irish Fair? (Check ONE) Car, van, truckBicycleMotorcycleOn FootPublic transportation (bus, light rail)
Would you be willing to pay an admission fee for the Irish Fair? No Yes, how much would you be willing to pay? \$
How many miles would you be willing to travel to attend the Irish Fair? miles
Overall, how satisfied are you with the Irish Fair of Minnesota? (Check ONE) Very dissatisfiedDissatisfiedUnsureSatisfiedVery Satisfied
Finally, a few questions about you.
What is your zip code? What year were you born? 19
Are you of Irish descent? Yes No What is your gender? Female Male
What is your annual household income (before taxes)?Less than \$25,000\$25,000-49,999\$50,000-99,999\$100,000-149,999\$150,000 or more
What is your ethnic origin? (Check ONE)Hispanic/LatinoNon-Hispanic/Non-Latino
What is your race? (Check all that apply) American Indian or Alaska NativeAsianBlack or African-AmericanWhiteNative Hawaiian or Other Pacific IslanderOther (specify:)
Thank you for your participation!! Date Time

Irish Fair of Minnesota 2014

2011 Irish Fair Survey
Have you been to Irish Fair before (check one)?YesNo If yes, how many years have you attended Irish Fair?# of Years What was the last year you attended Irish Fair?#
Where did you hear about Irish Fair? (check all that apply) Irish Bar/Restaurant Vord of Mouth Poster/Flyer TV Radio Irish Fair webpage Facebook Twitter Four Square Newspaper (which ones?): Pioneer Press Ad Irish Gazette Vitamin Ad Other (specify):
About how long do you intend to stay at Irish Fair? Hours
Which day(s) did you attend or plan to attend Irish Fair? (check all that apply) Thurs (08/11) Fri (08/12) Sat (08/13) Sun (08/14)
What do you enjoy most about Irish Fair (check one)? Live MusicChildren's ActivitiesFood & BeveragesDance StageCultural AreaRunSports AreaVendor MarketplacePeople WatchingMassPub ExperienceOther:
Please choose your main reason for coming to Irish Fair (check one): I am/know someone performing Recommended Family/Friend Celebrate my Irish heritage Live Music Affordable/No entry fee Attended previously Food & Beverages Pub Experience Children's activities Buy Irish merchandise Other (specify):
How many are in your group are (specify number in each age category):0-12 Years13-17 Years18-25 Years26-40 Years41-59 Years60+ Years
How much did YOU spend during your time at Irish Fair? \$ Parking \$ Souvenirs \$ Food & Bev \$ Off-site food/beverage \$ Lodging \$ Other
How did you get to Irish Fair (choose one)? Car, van, truckBicycleMotorcycleOn FootPublic transportation (bus)
If there was an admission fee for the Irish Fair, how much would you be willing to pay? \$
Overall, how satisfied are you with the Irish Fair of Minnesota? (Circle one) Very dissatisfied Dissatisfied Unsure Satisfied Very Satisfied
Finally, a few questions about you.
What is your zip code? What year were you born? 19
Are you of Irish descent? Yes No What is your gender? Female Male
What is your annual household income (before taxes)? Less Than \$5,000\$5,000-9,999\$10,000-14,999\$15,000-24,999\$25,000-34,999\$35,000-49,999 _\$50,000-\$74,999\$75,000-99,999\$100,000-124,999\$125,000-149,999\$150,000 or more
What is your ethnic origin (check one)?Hispanic/LatinoNon-Hispanic/Non-Latino
What is your race? (check all that apply) American Indian or Alaska NativeAsianBlack or African-AmericanWhiteNative Hawaiian or Other Pacific IslanderOther (Explain:)
Thank you for your participation!! Date Time

Appendix C

2007	7 Irish Fair Survey
Have you been to Irish Fair before (check of If yes, how many years have you at What was the <u>last</u> year you attende	tended Irish Fair?Years
Where did you hear about Irish Fair? (che Irish Bar/Restaurant Friends Family Newspaper (which ones?): Pioneer Press a City Pages Ad Other (specify):	yPoster/FlyerTVRadioInternet AdLocal Newspaper WebsiteStar Tribune Ad
About how long do you intend to be at Irisl	h Fair? Hours
Which day(s) did you attend or plan to atte Fri (08/10) Sat (08/11) Su	
	check <u>one</u>)? Food & BeveragesDance StageCultural Area People WatchingRiver CruiseOther
Live musicA	g to Irish Fair (check one): Recommended by family/friend To celebrate my Irish heritage Affordable/No entry fee Attended previously Children's activities Buy Irish merchandise
Who are you with (check one)? Alone Friends Family Organized Group Other (sp	Family & Friends
How many are in your group are (specify n 0-12 Years13-17 Years18+ You How much did <u>YOU</u> spend during your tin	ears old ne at Irish Fair?
Finally, a few questions about you.	Food & Beverages \$ Tickets \$ Other
What is your zip code?	What year were you born? 19
What is your gender? Female Male	e 3
What is your annual household income (be Less Than \$5,000 \$5,000-9,999 \$ \$35,000-49,999 \$50,000-\$74,999 \$150,000 or more	fore taxes)? 10,000-14,999\$15,000-24,999\$25,000-34,999 _\$75,000-99,999\$100,000-124,999\$125,000-149,999
Are you of Irish descent?YesNo	
What is your ethnic origin (check one)? Hispanic/LatinoNon-Hispanic/Non-	-Latino
What is your race? (check all that apply)	AsianBlack or African-American
American Indian or Alaska Native White	
	Other (Explain:)

Irish Fair of Minnesota 2014