



**SALINA
ARTS**
& HUMANITIES

**SMOKY
HILL
RIVER
FESTIVAL**

NEWS RELEASE

COOL TEMPS, HOT MUSIC AND MORE ARE RIVER FESTIVAL 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

(Salina, KS 08-19) Strong daily attendance, higher admission sales, vibrant entertainment acts and new exhibiting artists were among the takeaways of the 2019 Smoky Hill River Festival, held June 13-16 in Oakdale Park. Here's a recap:

OVER THE BRIDGE: The Festival 2019 gate count was 63,118, compared to 56,884 for 2018 and 67,381 for 2017. Attendance for Thursday's Festival Jam was up by more than 1,100, with Friday up by 2,090. Likewise, Saturday's guest count was higher by nearly 3,000. Festival Sunday closed strong, up by about 1,117 from 2018.

INTO THE PARK: At-gate admission grew by 811 buttons this year, with employee button and early sales down slightly. Regional sales were the second-highest in eight years, with 618 buttons sold in 17 cities. New among local retailers were the 24/7 Travel Center Stores on N. Ninth St. and W. Crawford St.

Overall, Festival admission-button sales were up by 427, with 17,803 buttons sold, compared to 17,376 in 2018. This does not include buttons contractually provided to vendors, artists or performers.

Also, select foundations and businesses underwrite several hundred buttons each year to support the **Festival Families First** program, which distributed 816 admission Buttons and 1,127 drink coupons in 2019, for children and families in need to enjoy.

ART SHOW: Fifty new or "new back" artists were among the 136 exhibitors in the Fine Art and Craft Show and the Art Demonstration area. The enhanced Art Patron Program included the third annual Thursday-night PREMIERE party attended by 392 artists and purchase patrons.

Combined sales for the 2019 art show and Art/Craft Demo area were \$426,838, compared to \$365,593 in 2018 and \$410,348 in 2017. The per-booth average for show artists was \$3,334, up \$275 per artist.

CATCH THE BEAT: Widely diverse music and entertainment on four live stages delighted Festival-goers this year. From headliners Lost Wax and hot sister duo Larkin Poe to hometown favorites Joe's Pet Project, musical genres for Festival 2019 included blues, smooth jazz, international folk, acoustic and rock 'n' roll.

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Immediate

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Among new acts were Jessica Fichot from Los Angeles and Matt Stansberry & The Romance from Oklahoma City. Magic Bubbles, Hedge People and balloon artists Up, Up and Away were three of the 11 roving acts that wowed Festival fans of all ages.

PINT-SIZED FUN: Artyopolis welcomed thousands of youngsters to explore the arts in Creation Crossing and through other hands-on activities. Five local charitable organizations ran colorful Game Street booths, each taking home an average of \$881 in revenue. One hundred thirty-three participating Festival artists donated 580 art works to First Treasures, one of just a few young art collector programs nationally.

FANTASTIC FOOD: Festival fans enjoyed Food Row favorites plus seven new foods in 2019, including buffalo burgers, steak fajitas, milkshakes, pancake-on-a-stick and French gougeres pastry. Food sales by 36 vendors were up by nearly \$40,000 at \$302,402 compared to \$263,160 in 2018 and \$293,547 in 2017.

MAKING IT HAPPEN: Three hundred fifty-one business or personal Festival sponsors contributed \$341,798 in cash or in-kind services to support the River Festival. It takes about \$670,000 in cash and in-kind support to stage the Festival each year. River Festival income typically exceeds expenses, with some proceeds going back to local cultural agencies to supplement their annual budgets.

“We are thrilled with the results of the 43rd Smoky Hill River Festival,” says SAH and Festival Executive Director Brad Anderson. “It is a blessing to live in such an engaged and generous community that contributes so much time, professional expertise and financial support. Salina’s commitment to the Festival is one of the reasons it continues to be one of the best in the country.”

For information on how to get involved in the Smoky Hill River Festival or other Salina Arts & Humanities programs, call 785-309-5770, visit riverfestival.com or e-mail sah@salina.org.

For needed accommodations, please call Amanda Morris at Salina Arts & Humanities at 785-309-5770 between 8:00 a.m. - Noon and 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Every effort will be made to accommodate known disabilities. For material or speech access, please call at least five working days prior to the event.

Salina Arts & Humanities, a department of the City of Salina, has served a unique role in arts advocacy and support since 1966. The Smoky Hill River Festival, Horizons Grants Program, Smoky Hill Museum, Arts Infusion Program in schools, Community Art & Design and the Friday Night Live performance series are among the programs of Salina Arts & Humanities, located at 211 W. Iron Avenue in Salina.

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