



NEWS RELEASE

SMOKY HILL RIVER FESTIVAL 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

(Salina, KS 07-22) The Smoky Hill River Festival was a success. Salina Arts & Humanities staff report that it was a very smooth year, despite having a short turnaround from the 2021 Festival held last September.

There were 15,688 wristbands sold, generating an income of \$210,575, the highest in six years. Wristband sales represent the Festival's largest income stream, providing the necessary funds to produce the event. While sales were strong, the final weekend gate count was 48,001, down from an average count of 60,000 annually.

"A variety of factors can cause lower numbers at the gates," commented Salina Arts & Humanities Executive Director Brad Anderson. "We were thrilled that earned revenue exceeded our budget. Overall, the Festival did well financially." The remaining Festival budget comes from other earned revenue, and one-third comes from cash contributions by individuals, businesses, and charitable foundations.

Visual Artists Fare Well

One hundred twenty visual art exhibitors displayed and sold work in the Fine Art and Craft Show and the Art Demonstration area. The growing Art Patron Program included the Thursday night PREMIERE party attended by 350 artists and purchase patrons. Overall sales for the 2022 art show and Art/Craft Demo area exceeded \$420,000. Patron purchases are the single greatest factor leading to artists returning to the event and promoting the show to their peers. Thousands of attendees engaged with site-specific art installations by 23 artists. "There are very few festivals in the country commissioning this level of work," commented Anderson.

Energetic Performances

Diverse music on three live stages captivated Festival-goers this year. From headliners Jason Boland & The Stragglers, Gangstagrass, SunDub, and beyond, musical genres for 2022 included country, hip-hop, reggae, soul, and bluegrass.

Among first-time acts were Las Cafeteras from Los Angeles, The RT's from New York City, Love out of Wichita, and Armchair Boogie from Madison, WI. Clan Tynker enthralled audiences at the children's stage and throughout the park. Returning Drum Safari, Richard Renner, and Friends of the River Foundation's River Puppet

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Palooza were three of the eight roving acts that entertained Festival fans of all ages.

Family Fun

Artyopolis welcomed over 2,000 children who participated in various make-and-take craft activities under the big tent of Creation Crossing. Family fun was had by all as adults and children lined up to receive face painting and airbrush tattoos in Paintchoo Plaza. Game Street, newly embellished fiber art by artist Marideth Highsmith, was busy with family and friends competing to get a high score.

First Treasures, a program for young collectors, saw 466 children select their own artwork from 98 participating artists. Many young art buyers visit artists at their booths to learn more about the art they create and sell.

Food Galore

Festival fans enjoyed Food Row favorites plus trying new offerings from ten new food vendors in 2022, including pineapple whip, crawfish boil, sweet Thai pork tacos, and the Texas twister drink in a boot. Food sales by 35 vendors totaled \$319,156 in food for varied appetites. The 2022 food sales were the highest in 13 years.

Making it Happen

Over 1,500 volunteers supported the event through committee work and individual shifts, managing the gates, taking care of artists, allowing children to create and use their imaginations, and supporting Festival operations and auxiliary events. Volunteers continue to be an essential resource to keep the Festival affordable and to provide high levels of customer service for thousands of participants.

“We are thrilled with the overall results of the 46th Smoky Hill River Festival,” says Anderson. “Salina’s pride and support ensure that it continues to be one of the best in the country.”

The Festival also benefits from the support of part-time seasonal Festival staff and City staff in every department. “Their continuous dedication supports the long-term success of our event,” says Anna Pauscher Morawitz, Operations & Development Manager at Salina Arts & Humanities.

2023 Plans Already Underway

Festival staff and committees are already preparing for next year’s event. Extensive evaluations take place, and detailed plans are made based on participant and patron feedback. The 47th Smoky Hill River Festival will be held in Oakdale Park on June 8-11, 2023.

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 as an arts advocate and resource partner since 1966. The Smoky Hill River Festival, Horizons Grants Program, Smoky Hill Museum, Arts Infusion Program in schools, Community Art & Design, and Creative Connections are among the programs of Salina Arts & Humanities, located at 211 W. Iron Avenue in Salina.

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