

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY

2016 Shreveport Mardi Gras Parades

Prepared for:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was commissioned to measure the economic impact of four Mardi Gras parades in Shreveport in 2016: Krewe of Harambee, Krewe of Centaur, Krewe of Gemini and Krewe of Highland. The data for this report was collected via in-person surveys of parade attendees and a Facebook survey posted to the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau Facebook page.

Key Highlights:

- The direct economic impact of the four parades was estimated to be **\$9,232,715**.
- Adding indirect spending, the total economic impact of the four parades was estimated to be **\$16,157,251**.
- Adding the media exposure value (as measured by the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau), the 2016 Mardi Gras Parades had an overall impact estimated to be **\$16,567,075**.
- As evidenced from the Facebook survey conducted herein, there are a number of concerns about the safety of the Centaur and Gemini parades and it is recommended that Krewe and city leaders work to alleviate the issues, thereby maintaining the city's reputation and visitor spending.

METHODOLOGY

A paper survey was created and administered by this consultant and his associates. Before and during each parade, attendees were approached along the parade route. Respondents were asked how they heard about the parade, their home zip code, if they were visiting from outside of Caddo/Bossier Parishes, how many people were in their group, how many nights they were staying in town, in what hotel they were staying (and how many rooms and the average room rate if applicable), how much their group planned to spend on meals, shopping/entertainment, rental car and gaming/gambling while in town, and if attending this event was their primary reason for visiting the area (See the entire survey in the Appendix). Individuals were randomly selected and only one person from each group was surveyed. All completed surveys were entered into a database for analysis.

Approximately one week after the last parade, an online Facebook survey was created by this consultant to gather more detailed information on parade attendees. In particular, we wanted to ask parade attendees how they heard about the parade(s) as most respondents in the in-person survey indicated "don't know" or "always knew about it." So, a question with more answer choices (and giving respondents the chance to complete the survey on their own time) was necessary. Also, demographic questions such as age, gender, ethnicity, household size and household income were collected via this online survey, as well (See the entire survey in the Appendix.).

According to Catherine Kennedy, Division Manager of Event Services for Shreveport Public Assembly and Recreation (SPAR), the following parade attendances were estimated:

Harambee: 5,000
Centaur: 285,000
Gemini: 285,000
Highland: 10,000

These attendance figures were used herein to calculate the economic impact of the parades.

Attendance figures this year were estimated to be relatively high given the good weather in the area. The high temperature (as reported by www.wunderground.com) for each parade was:

Harambee (1/18): 51° F
Centaur (1/30): 76° F
Gemini (2/6): 54° F
Highland (2/7): 62° F

SURVEY RESULTS

- A total of **627** respondents completed the in-person survey at the parades (Harambee = 139, Centaur = 160, Gemini = 154 and Highland = 174).
- One thousand and two hundred and twenty-seven (**1,227**) respondents completed the Facebook survey.

Percent Visitors:

It is estimated that **585,000** people attended the four Shreveport Mardi Gras parades and that **169,898** (or 29%) of the attendees were visiting from outside of the area. The breakdown of visitors by parade was as follows:

- **9.4%** of Harambee Parade attendees were visitors (90.6% Caddo-Bossier Residents)
- **24.4%** of Centaur Parade attendees were visitors (75.6% Caddo-Bossier Residents)
- **34.5%** of Gemini Parade attendees were visitors (65.5% Caddo-Bossier Residents)
- **17.2%** of Highland Parade attendees were visitors (82.8% Caddo-Bossier Residents)

Spending:

Analyzing the results from the online Facebook surveys, the following were calculated:

- Day Trippers spent **\$33.67** per person.
- Hotel Overnighters spent **\$108.33** per person and stayed an average of **1.79** nights, resulting in **\$193.92** spent per person during their visit.

Spending amounts from the Facebook survey respondents were used as post event spending numbers tend to be more accurate in this consultant's experience. The number of Non-Hotel Overnighters was insignificant as the few that indicated that they were staying with friends and family also indicated that they would have come to visit with them regardless of the parades.

VISITOR SPENDING

	Attendance	% of Attendees	# of Attendees	Visitor Spending
Harambee	Hotel Overnights	1.4%	72	\$13,951
	Day Trippers	7.9%	396	\$13,321
	Caddo-Bossier Residents	90.6%	4,532	\$0
		5,000		\$27,272
Centaur	Hotel Overnights	3.8%	10,688	\$2,072,484
	Day Trippers	20.6%	58,781	\$1,978,969
	Caddo-Bossier Residents	75.6%	215,531	\$0
		285,000		\$4,051,453
Gemini	Hotel Overnights	3.9%	11,104	\$2,153,231
	Day Trippers	30.6%	87,134	\$2,933,503
	Caddo-Bossier Residents	65.5%	186,762	\$0
		285,000		\$5,086,734
Highland	Hotel Overnights	0.6%	57	\$11,145
	Day Trippers	16.7%	1,667	\$56,111
	Caddo-Bossier Residents	82.8%	8,276	\$0
		10,000		\$67,256
TOTALS			585,000	\$ 9,232,715

Indirect Spending

In addition to the money spent in the local economy by the visitors, there is an indirect economic impact from visitor spending, as well. For example, if someone spends \$1 in a local economy, a percentage of that dollar is re-spent in this area. Workers at local hotels, restaurants, etc. will take part of their earnings and spend them on their daily living expenses. Based on other projects that this consultant has done and in consultation with a major Convention and Visitors Bureau in the south, a multiplier of **1.75** was selected. That is, for every \$1 spent in the economy, 75 cents is re-spent.

Media Value

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau analyzed the media exposure from the event and determined that all of the parades generated **\$409,825** (Harambee = \$81,931, Centaur = \$184,555, Gemini = \$106,723, Highland = \$36,617) in media exposure value for the Shreveport-Bossier area. The program searches for online news stories of the event and assigns a dollar value to each (equivalent to what it would cost to purchase advertising in that media outlet).

TOTAL IMPACT	
Direct Economic Impact from Visitors	\$ 9,232,715
Indirect Economic Impact	\$ 6,924,536
TOTAL Economic Impact	\$ 16,157,251
Media Exposure Value	\$ 409,825
TOTAL IMPACT TO THE AREA	\$ 16,567,075

As the table above reveals, the total impact of the 2016 Shreveport Mardi Gras Parades is estimated to be **\$16,567,075**.

OTHER FINDINGS

Facebook Survey Results

A total of **1,227** individuals completed the online survey posted to the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau's Facebook page. Below is a breakdown of the resident and visitor demographics and behaviors.

Shreveport-Bossier Residents (1,042 individuals):

- 79% female, 60% between the ages of 30-49, 88% Caucasian, 29% have a household income of over \$100,000, median household size was 3 people
- For 5%, this was their first year attending a Mardi Gras parade; 51.3% have been attending Shreveport Mardi Gras parades for over ten years
- Median group size was 10

Visitors (185 individuals):

- 79% female, 54% between the ages of 30-49, 88% Caucasian, 23% have a household income of over \$100,000, median household size was 3 people
- For 9.4%, this was their first year attending a Mardi Gras parade; 35% have been attending Shreveport Mardi Gras parades for over ten years
- Median group size was 10
- 93% of the visitors came to Shreveport-Bossier because of the parades
- Visitors attended on average 1.98 parades this year

Other Facebook Results:

- Both the residents and visitors found out about the parades via experience, Facebook and online (See the graphs in the Appendix). This was consistent with the in-person surveying. Almost every person surveyed along the parade routes indicated that “they just knew” when asked how they heard about the parades this year.
- The majority of residents and visitors invite friends from outside of Shreveport-Bossier to attend the parades with them (See the graphs in the Appendix).
- When asked “How can the Shreveport Mardi Gras Parades be improved” in an open-ended question, there were many safety concerns expressed ranging from excessive drinking, ATV usage on the streets, lack of public restrooms, etc. Here are just a few excerpts from the hundreds of comments received:
 - “Gemini and Centaur are the only ones I went to. I would like to see the 4 wheelers, ATVs off the street before the parade. There are children everywhere and some of these drivers are drinking alcohol and could easily hit someone.”
 - “I know it is hard, but there should be some focus on stopping drunk people from injuring others. These intoxicated people like to hurl the beads back at the float or across the street at the other crowd. This could cause real injury. Other than that, it is a great experience.”
 - “Better crowd control by police! – Centaur”
 - “More cops to keep the underage drinking down and to keep from all the fights”
 - “Get back to policing Shreve City like years prior”
 - “Start a little earlier”
 - “More police presence”
 - “Safety increased”
 - “Centaur & Gemini - less alcohol - larger area designated as family. More police presence. Begin earlier”
 - “More security/stricter rules for areas with small children”
 - “Control the crowds better. No alcohol or ATV usage at any parade. Start earlier.”
 - “Too much drinking and violence; Centaur and Gemini”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Because the Mardi Gras Parades have such an impact on the Shreveport-Bossier economy, this consultant recommends that the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau meet with the Krewes and city leaders to explore ways to make the parades safer. For instance, some survey respondents suggested starting the Centaur and Gemini parades earlier in the day in an effort to hopefully reduce the consumption of alcohol and to finish before sundown. Another respondent suggested starting Centaur and Gemini on Kings Highway and finishing downtown hopefully encouraging parade goers to visit downtown restaurants and bars once the parade is over.
2. More could be done to educate out of town parade goers. Via the Facebook survey results and in talking with people on the parade route, those visiting Shreveport-Bossier wanted more information on the parades such as where to park, where to view, where are the “no throw” zones, etc. The Bureau’s Mardi Gras Gris Gris Guide and video produced by Chris Jay are excellent resources. Perhaps, they could be more visible on the Bureau’s website and/or tagged to be more prominent on the web via search engine optimization.

LIMITATIONS

There are inherent biases in asking people to forecast how much they think they will spend while visiting the area. Thus, the Facebook results were determined to be more reliable.

Because parades are un-ticketed events, it is difficult to estimate the attendance. Attendance figures in this report were provided by SPAR.

ABOUT THE CONSULTANT

Scott Wysong, Ph.D. is President of Wysong Brand Solutions, LLC and an Associate Professor of Sports Marketing at the University of Dallas. Dr. Wysong holds a MBA and Ph.D. in Marketing from the University of Texas at Arlington and a BA in Economics from Vanderbilt University. He has published a number of research articles in academic outlets and conducted survey research for numerous firms including economic impact studies for the Duck Commander Independence Bowl, Taylor Swift '1989' Tour Concert, Christmas on Caddo Fireworks Festival, Red River Revel Arts Festival, National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Region 4 Qualifying, Bass Champs Team Tournament Sponsored by Yamaha, Battle on the Border High School Football Showcase and Red River State Fair Classic. He resides in Shreveport, Louisiana.

APPENDIX

Shreveport-Bossier Parade Survey

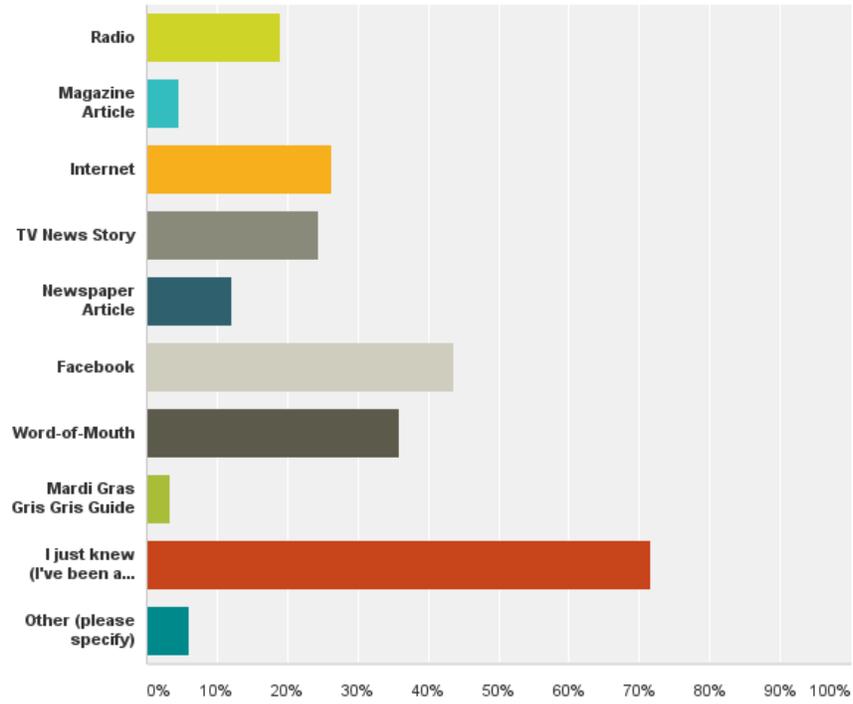
1. How did you hear about the parade today? _____
2. What is your zip code? _____
3. Is this zip code in Caddo or Bossier Parish? _____ No _____ Yes (**Thanks; conclude survey**)
 - a. How many people are in your group, including yourself? _____
 - b. How many nights is your group staying in Shreveport-Bossier? _____
 - c. What hotel are you staying in? _____ None _____
 - How many hotel rooms is your group using? _____
 - Average nightly rate: _____
 - d. Approximately how much is your group spending on the following while visiting Shreveport-Bossier?
 - i. Meals: _____
 - ii. Entertainment/Shopping: _____
 - iii. Rental Car: _____
 - iv. Gambling/Gaming: _____
4. Is attending this parade your primary reason for visiting Shreveport-Bossier today? _____ Yes _____ No

<THANK YOU>

Residents

Q3 How did you hear about the 2016 Shreveport Mardi Gras Parades this year (Check all that apply)?

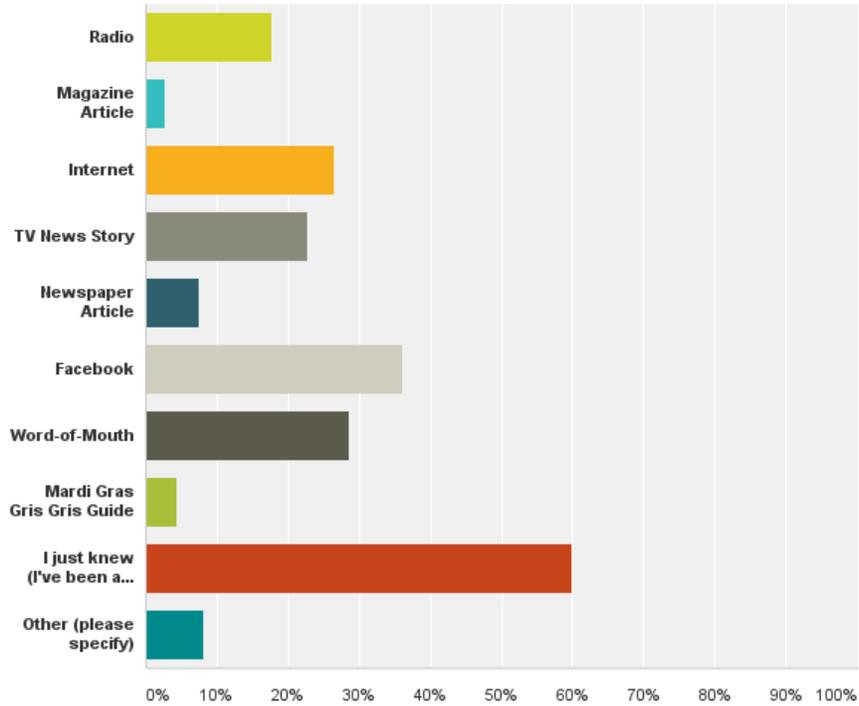
Answered: 1,040 Skipped: 2



Visitors

Q3 How did you hear about the 2016 Shreveport Mardi Gras Parades this year (Check all that apply)?

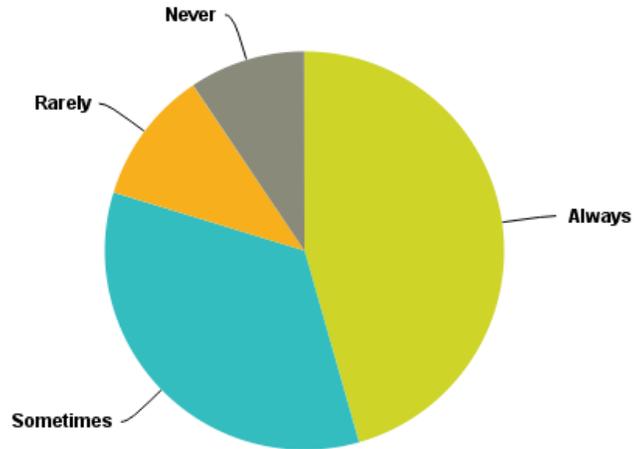
Answered: 185 Skipped: 0



Residents

Q5 Do you invite friends/family from outside of the area to attend the Mardi Gras Parades with you?

Answered: 1,031 Skipped: 11



Visitors

Q5 Do you invite friends/family from outside of the area to attend the Mardi Gras Parades with you?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 1

