

Fayetteville Arts Festival 2005

Executive Summary

Produced by
Fayetteville Downtown Partners



OVERVIEW

Arts and culture is core to the identity – and success - of Fayetteville. The University of Arkansas, Walton Arts Center and the Fayetteville Public Library have anchored this city as the intellectual epicenter of Northwest Arkansas and we see the results – a prolific and innovative community that is growing at an exponential rate.

Fayetteville Downtown Partners (FDP) was challenged to produce a festival that reflected this dynamic community, supported local artists and engaged new cultural consumers. In this regard, the 2005 Fayetteville Arts Festival (FAF) was a grand experiment. Partnering with over thirty organizations to produce six days of visual arts, music, theater, dance, film and poetry, our plan was to use this event to kick-start a national branding campaign that would establish Fayetteville as THE top-of-the-mind cultural destination in the region.

With the idea that we needed a cultural mass to start this effort, we held the FAF in 19 locations and hosted over 195 visual and performing artists. Our efforts yielded an estimated 11,031 people, with 51% of that attendance through ticketed events. Several downtown art galleries broke visitor records for the gallery walk and one downtown business had one of the most successful sales weekends since opening.

FDP also knew that we needed to tell the festival story throughout the region. With a target marketing range of 500 miles, we were successful in getting the festival covered in print, television and radio from Little Rock, Arkansas to Lawrence, Kansas. Based on numbers provided to us by the various media outlets that covered the event, festival information reached in excess of 2.5 million people. This festival outreach has positioned Fayetteville Downtown Partners to continue aggressively promoting our downtown cultural assets year-round, thus maximizing our limited marketing resources.

It is difficult to provide continuous qualitative support of the arts and take program risks at the same time. Innovation of this kind is not without financial uncertainty and the FAF 2005 was no exception. FDP sailed into uncharted territory by working with several new partners and merging a large number of historically independent arts events into one festival. Community financial support and earned program revenue exceeded expectations in several areas and the risks paid off. However, a few of the programs were financially vulnerable. FDP carefully tracked program revenue vs. expense ratios and we are poised to strengthen those financially weak areas for next year.

FDP is committed to developing a solid foundation of achievement that supports and grows the city's creative identity. Events like the Fayetteville Arts Festival provide continuous public support for the arts, while acting as a fresh way to engage local audiences, promote regional and national tourism and enhance business recruitment and retention efforts.

We will continue to provide the leadership and expertise to strengthen the experience economy in Fayetteville, as well as facilitate local, national and international arts offerings that serve the needs of Northwest Arkansans.

Fayetteville Arts Festival 2005 Program Summary

Visual Arts

Arts Festival Booths
Gallery Art Walk
Flatrock Clay Festival
Artwork of Helen Philips Slide Presentation
Community Portrait Project
Open Studios: Artist-In-Residence
Art Installation by Alice Guffey-Miller
Summer Sculpture Dedication

Film

Fayetteville Short Film Festival

Theater

The Illumaniti Theater Improv Group
Fresh Theatre: Arkansas' Playwrights Workshop Staged Reading
24-Hour Play Festival

Music

Mayor's Concert featuring Jura Margulis
Fiddle Music to Lunch By
Young Talents Piano Recital
Back to College Concert featuring Lifehouse
Lunch with the North Arkansas Symphony Orchestra
Starlight Jazz Series with Astral Project
Back to School Concert with Amos Lee
Patti Loveless Concert
HJMM Quartet featuring Greg Salerno on Guitar
The Plebians Jazz Trio
North Arkansas Symphony Orchestra Trio
North Arkansas Symphony Chamber Strings
Reese Neal
Premier CD Release Party: Sounds Made in Mountains
 Early Morning Bourbon Girls
 Brighter Later
 The Odds
Charliehorse Band
eckobase
Big Smith Family Concert; From Hay to ZZZZZZ
Cris Hollow
Geoffrey Oelsner
Ozone Players
The Fulbright Trio
Boston Mountain Brassworks

Poetry/Literature

“The Wanderer” Youth Literary Magazine Roll-Out Party
Arkansas vs. The World Poetry Slam Semi-Finals
Seven-Up Youth Open Mic Night
Janet Greeson’s Storytime for Young People
“Gathering of the Groups” with Award Winning Author Molly Giles
Arkansas vs. The World National Poetry Slam Invitational

Dance/Movement

The Dance Coalition
Desert Fire Dance Troupe
2004 West Coast Swing National Champion Terry Roseborough

General Programming

Walton Arts Center Open House
Arts Festival Beer/Wine Garden

Marketing/Outreach

FAF was advertised in four newspapers and on seven radio stations. The festival was covered by twelve newspapers, one society magazine, three television stations and two radio stations. There were 393 print and radio advertisements, 55 articles, 8 television news stories, 3 radio interviews and 2 August public service announcements. The festival had a total media reach of 3,140,628 people. The festival was also listed on fourteen websites in addition to the websites of the television stations and print media outlets who promoted and covered the festival.

In addition to media coverage, FAF was promoted through grassroots efforts. Approximately 1,500 fliers were passed out at the Fayetteville Farmers’ Market on August 13th, and approximately 500 FAF programs were distributed at the market on August 20th. There was a FAF booth at the University of Arkansas’ Razorbash, located in the Student Union’s courtyard, on August 24th. Forty FAF posters were distributed throughout the university campus: Old Main, Mullins Library, Student Union, Kimpel Hall, Arts Building, Music Building, and all dormitories. Over 2,800 fliers were distributed on the first day of classes in the English, Drama, Journalism and Music Departments. The Drama Department agreed to offer extra credit to students who attended the Poetry Slams or the 24-Hour Play Festival.

Financial

We had projected the festival to cost a little over \$99,000, but we had some cost overruns and the final festival tab ended at about \$101,500. The festival solicited \$42,500 in cash and in-kind donations and \$13,500 in earned income. We projected earned revenue to exceed \$19,000, but were considerably short on ticket sales. The festival ended with a deficit of \$7,163.22. This deficit, however, was covered by an arts festival reserve fund and did not affect the FDP administration budget.

FAF 2004 was estimated to cost about \$13,500 to produce and ended with \$6,285 in the bank. FAF 2005 cost a little over \$101,500 and will leave an estimated \$7,896 in seed money for next year's programming. This is a \$1,611 net gain for the festival. FDP was able to track the program expense/revenue ratio to strengthen our event choices for 2006.

Conclusion

The Fayetteville Arts Festival is produced to encourage public appreciation for arts and culture, strengthen Fayetteville's identity as the regional epicenter of creativity and expand local audiences for the arts by providing a high-quality event featuring a variety of visual and performing artists.

To accomplish this mission, FDP will be conducting several post-mortem discussions with our major programming partners, as well as the general arts community. This feedback will be used to strengthen the 2006 Fayetteville Arts Festival, as well as build continuing opportunities for year-round arts and cultural programming support.

Fayetteville offers a wide variety of arts – from the Walton Arts Center to the small galleries that dot the city's landscape. Along with our festivals, these arts-based businesses attract residents and tourists who support adjacent businesses such as restaurants, lodging, retail and parking.

Civic and private investment in the arts is also vital to sustaining Fayetteville's dynamic cultural community. This investment is not simply a quality-of-life issue, but one of sound financial policy. A 1998 study by the Bureau of Economic Analysis showed that spending on performing arts events was \$2.6 billion more than consumer spending on motion pictures and \$1.8 billion more than spectator sporting events. America's nonprofit arts industry also generates more than \$134 billion in economic activity every year, including \$24.4 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue.

Fayetteville's various festivals, arts events and cultural initiatives have one thing in common - ACCESS. The need to grow the arts market beyond our own backyard is vital to the future of our creative community. We must invest in an aggressive advertising and promotions campaign that can maximize the outreach produced by the arts festival, while creating civic and private funding mechanisms that support and strengthen the production and development of our local arts community.