

# Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® presented by Canon



Photo courtesy of Triston Garcia

## 2019 Economic Impact & Guest Research

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors, as well as generating tourist revenue. Both the Fiesta's direct and indirect economic impact have residual effects that can be felt locally and statewide.

This study, conducted by a leading national market research and economic impact firm, Forward Analytics, demonstrates the profound impact the Balloon Fiesta has on Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico.

## Highlights of the Study

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- 2019 Balloon Fiesta attracted an estimated 866,414 guest-visits over the nine-day event, October 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>. Survey research shows the largest ballooning event on earth attracted approximately 166,350 guest-visits which were attributable to Albuquerque residents (19.2 percent), while 618,620 guest-visits (71.4 percent) were attributable to persons who traveled from outside of New Mexico. Survey respondents included residents of 47 other states, with most out-of-state visitors coming from Texas, California, Colorado, and Arizona.
- The 48<sup>th</sup> annual Balloon Fiesta had a total estimated economic impact on Metro-Albuquerque's business volume of \$186.82 million. Balloon Fiesta guest spending directly increased the local business volume by \$109.89 million and \$76.93 million in indirect impact. The government revenue attributable to 2019 Balloon Fiesta is estimated \$6.52 million for the state of New Mexico; \$4.09 million for the City of Albuquerque, and \$1.44 million for Bernalillo County.
- 2019 Balloon Fiesta brought an increase in economic impact when compared to the 2017 Balloon Fiesta. The 46<sup>th</sup> annual Balloon Fiesta in 2017 had an estimated attendance of 887,970 guests and generated a total economic impact of \$172.98 million for the Metro-Albuquerque economy. Per person spending increased from \$150 in 2017 to \$157 in 2019. The 48<sup>th</sup> annual Balloon Fiesta attracted a larger number of *non-local* guests which also contributed to the increase in economic impact from 2017 to 2019.
- Balloon Fiesta guests (non-local) spent an estimated \$17.99 million at local restaurants. Survey research determined that 53.6% of guests paid for overnight accommodations, either at a hotel, motel, inn, or RV facility, resulting in an estimated \$41.80 million in local lodging revenue. According to survey research, the average room cost per night was \$162. Based on this estimate, hotel revenue generated \$2.51 million in lodger's tax for the Albuquerque area.
- The estimated \$109.89 million in direct spending attributable to Balloon Fiesta produced an additional \$58.99 million in New Mexico's employment wages supporting 1,482 FTE at an annual salary of \$39,811.
- Guests spent an average of \$31 per person with Balloon Fiesta concessionaires, many of which are regional businesses. Most of this spending was on food/drinks and retail and the estimated average spending excludes parking and admission charges.
- The most popular sessions at Balloon Fiesta (as indicated by survey respondents) are balloon mass ascensions, balloon glows, and fireworks. Survey research shows that the event was an overall positive experience among its guests as an overwhelming 92.2% of guests were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with 2019 Balloon Fiesta.
- 2019 saw a 70% increase in first-time visitors to Balloon Fiesta (52.4% in 2017). Fifteen percent have attended five or more years. With 14 ballooning sessions available to guests, the majority (70.6%) attended two or more sessions and 15.3% attended five or more.

- Balloon Fiesta promotes Albuquerque and New Mexico's tourism industry as well as increases exposure of city and state as a visitor destination. In 2019, more than 3.4 billion impressions were generated on digital and traditional media.
- Balloon Fiesta guests fully understand that corporate sponsorship is paramount to the success of the event. The companies and brands are well-recognized by guests, and sponsorship creates a real brand affinity with consumers. Attendees were asked, "When you think of Balloon Fiesta sponsors, which companies or brands come to mind?" Nearly 66.4% could identify two or more Balloon Fiesta sponsors. Thirty-nine percent of guests could identify four or more. Presenting Sponsor Canon was identified by 63.2% of guests through unaided sponsorship awareness surveys.

## Introduction

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Albuquerque is a “bucket list” travel destination and there's no doubt Balloon Fiesta plays a significant role in the City's destination rankings. For the past 48 years, hundreds of thousands of people have traveled to the City during the first full week of October to be a part of the largest ballooning event on earth.

The nine-day event starts early each morning with hundreds of hot air balloons launching into the New Mexico skies, filling the Rio Grande Valley with amazing views. The evening events include Balloon Glows where tethered balloons light up the night, followed by a dazzling display of fireworks. Balloon Fiesta *Main Street* offers a smorgasbord of entertainment, including concerts and performances, a tremendous option of food vendors, retail, arts and crafts, Balloon Discovery Center exhibit, and giveaways. In all, there are 14 sessions that include Mass Ascensions, Balloon Glows, Fireworks and a variety of other balloon events.

Special events play an important role in destination marketing. In between events, Balloon Fiesta guests explore attractions, museums, and restaurants, in outdoor activities in Albuquerque and throughout the central part of New Mexico. The local economies benefit greatly over the nine-day event as it is infused with millions of dollars in additional tourism-related revenue.

For Albuquerque residents, Balloon Fiesta is a unique occasion to celebrate the local culture and interact within the community. It's an annual ritual where they can meet with friends and family, enjoy local foods, and take pride in the natural beauty of the place called home. The people of Albuquerque are flattered by the national and worldwide interest in their long-standing tradition showcasing their city and state.

## Purpose of the Study

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Events like Balloon Fiesta have been recognized as some of the most important areas of the tourism industry. Balloon Fiesta contributes to local communities in a number of ways, including creating economic impact, enhancing the overall image of the destination, and building community involvement.

The Albuquerque economy depends upon the revenue, employment, and wages that festivals and special events bring to the City. Evaluating the impact of Balloon Fiesta is crucial in order to analyze the return on investment (ROI) for citizens, event planners, sponsors, government entities, and the community. In addition to the standard economic impact questions, audience research was designed to measure the following:

- overall event satisfaction
- demographics of attendees
- attendance motivators
- communications and marketing activities
- and sponsorship awareness.

## Methodology

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The study utilized a comprehensive survey to collect spending data, demographics, psychographics, sponsorship awareness and more from a random sample of Balloon

Fiesta guests. Prior to the event, Forward Analytics collaborated with AIBF to create a custom four-page survey that was designed to provide fuel to event planners, sponsors, and the supporting community in the form of pertinent and reliable data.

Forward Analytics fielded on-site, intercept interviews with 1,368 adult attendees (ages 18+) during 14 sessions of Balloon Fiesta. A small incentive (official Balloon Fiesta key chain) was provided to survey respondents. The sample size represents a statistical significance of +/-3% margin at the 95% confidence interval. This means the statistics are within 3 percentage points of the real population 95% of the time. Generally, a +/-5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level is considered significant for making reliable business and marketing decisions.

## **The Economic Impact Model**

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The methodology employed in the economic impact section of this report was derived from an original set of research tools and techniques developed by Caffrey & Isaacs for the American Council on Education (ACE). (Caffrey, John and Isaacs, Herbert, "Estimating the Impact of a College or University on the Local Economy," American Council on Education, 1971) The ACE impact model is an academically-accepted social science research methodology that employs linear cash flow modeling to track the impact of money brought into the economy from outside sources. In this study, Forward Analytics' ACE-based economic impact has been designed to measure the spending of Balloon Fiesta guests and the impact of their spending in the Albuquerque Metro.

This "fresh dollar" approach represents a true expansion of the economy, and does not track dollars that already exist within the region. Specifically, this study measures *new money* brought into the economy by out-of-area Balloon Fiesta guests. Spending by attending local residents represents a redistribution of existing money in the community and is not included in this study. Survey research revealed that 19.2% of Balloon Fiesta guests reside in the Albuquerque Metro area and are considered local residents, (and their spending information is not included in this study). That said, 80.2% of Balloon Fiesta guests (700,060 non-residents) spent "new dollars" and impacted the local economy, as outlined further in this report.

Direct business revenue is generated from Balloon Fiesta guests spending at local hotels and restaurants, retailers, and attractions, plus for travel sources like transportation, parking and fuel. The linear cash flow model used in this study takes into account the re-spending of first line (direct) expenditures within the economy as a result of what professional economists term the "multiplier effect." The indirect impact tracks guest spending in the tourism industry by successive recipients until the funds eventually leak out of the economy. The sum of these direct and indirect expenditures represents the total impact of Balloon Fiesta on the local business volume.

Additionally, the direct spending of Balloon Fiesta guests generates government revenues for the city, county, and state and adds to salaries and wages for workers who support the annual event. The impact analysis measures the tax revenues generated for the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and State of New Mexico.

We consider the following economic impact measure a conservative one. There are additional sources of economic activity not accounted for in this report. We omit impacts due to spending by Balloon Fiesta, official festival sponsors and vendors, and unaffiliated businesses that operate around the event. It's noted that much of the organization's

operating budget comes from out-of-area sponsor dollars and covers costs for PR and advertising, equipment rentals, direct mail, insurance, entertainment and hospitality, etc. Many of these dollars are spent with local companies and on local products. Sponsor and vendor expenditures may include marketing material, booth supplies, food and serving products, as well as the cost of travel.

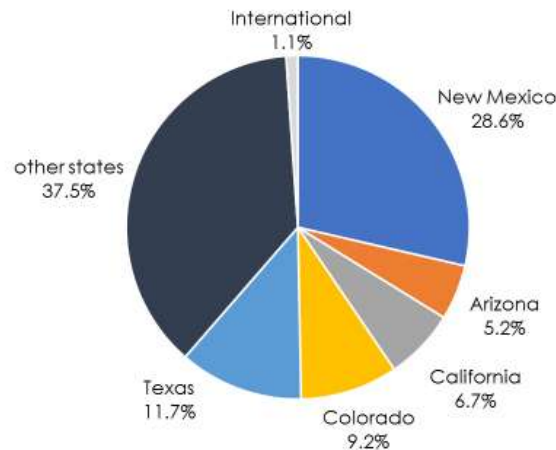
## Demographics and Guest Information

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2019 Balloon Fiesta spanned nine days with 14 sessions of ballooning activities from October 5<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. It's a "bucket list" experience for many. Unlike any other event, spectators can stand on the launch field to get an up-close view of how ballooning "unfolds." And they can even take a balloon adventure of their own.

2019 Balloon Fiesta reached an impressive attendance of 866,414 estimated guest visits. As previously shared, 19.2% of guests reside in the Albuquerque Metro and 28.6% in the state of New Mexico. A remarkable 71.4% of survey respondents reside outside of New Mexico and traveled to Albuquerque to experience firsthand the most photographed event in the world – that's more than 618,620 out-of-state guests. Survey respondents represented 47 states and international countries, including Switzerland, Canada, Scotland, and Australia, to name a few. Sixty-six percent of guests stayed overnight and away from home while attending Balloon Fiesta; either at paid accommodations or with friends/family. The average night stay was 4.1 nights.

Sixty-one percent of Balloon Fiesta guests reside in the following five states: New Mexico, Texas, California, Colorado, and Arizona.



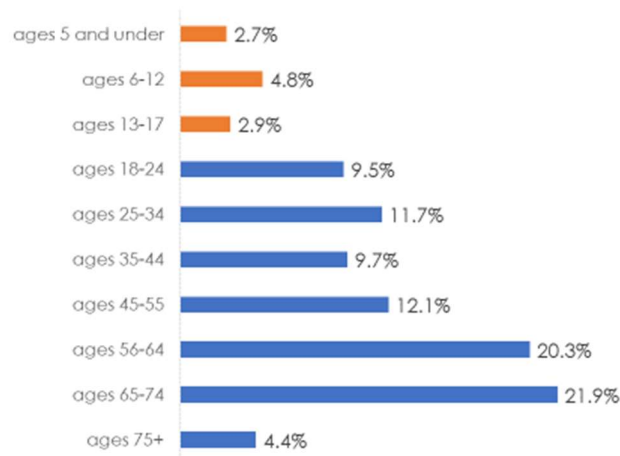
Both first-time and repeat visitors play a fundamental role in the overall well-being and success of a festival, and organizers must strive to achieve a balance between the two types of visitors. 2019 brings a substantial increase in Balloon Fiesta newcomers. Seventy percent of survey respondents came to Balloon Fiesta for the first time this year– a rise from 52.4% in 2017. Fifteen percent of visitors attended five or more years.

There are attributes that differentiate the first-time visitor group and repeat visitors attending Balloon Fiesta. These differences include demographics, travel motivations and characteristics, and event perceptions. Newcomers attend more sessions, spend more overnights and consequently more money in the Albuquerque area and on Balloon Fiesta

grounds. First-time guests are highly intrigued by most aspects and want the full experience – from day and evening balloon shows to competitions to the Balloon Discover Center. Interestingly, the fiesta food is not on at the top of their list and consequently food spending is less for newcomers vs. the repeat guest. Returning visitors tend to come in larger groups and are more motivated by relaxation and hanging out with friends and family.

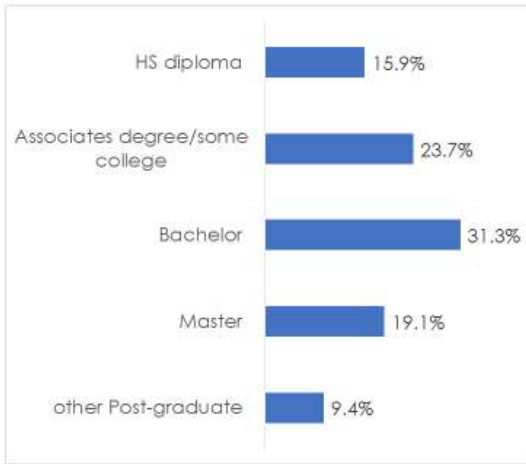
While festivals have traditionally been more of an activity for large groups, Balloon Fiesta attracts a lot of couples and families too. Couples – some friends, some family- make up 42.1% of survey respondents, and 23.2% come as a group of 5 or more. Fifty-two percent of survey respondents make Balloon Fiesta a family affair; another 20.5% come with both friends and family. The average party size, or groups visiting Balloon Fiesta, is 3.8 people, of whom 3.41 are adults and .39 are children. Twenty-four percent of visiting parties came with children under the age of 18. The age breakdown of guests is illustrated below.

Age Breakdown  
of Balloon Fiesta Guests

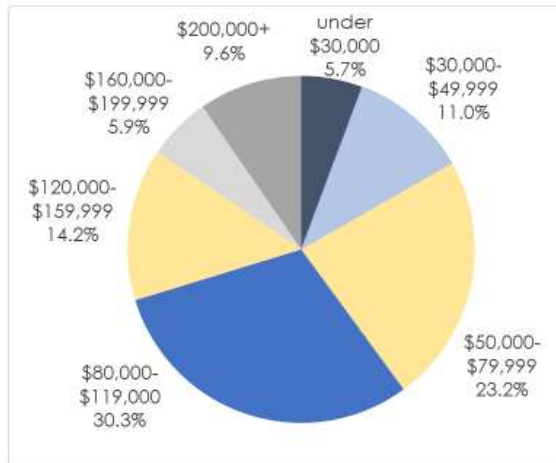


Sixty percent of Balloon Fiesta guests have a bachelor's or advanced degree as their highest level of education (exceeding the U.S. Census Bureau report of 34% of U.S. adults ages 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or more). Household incomes reflect the high level of education of guests as 60% of guests have a household income of \$80,000 or more.

**Education of Guests**

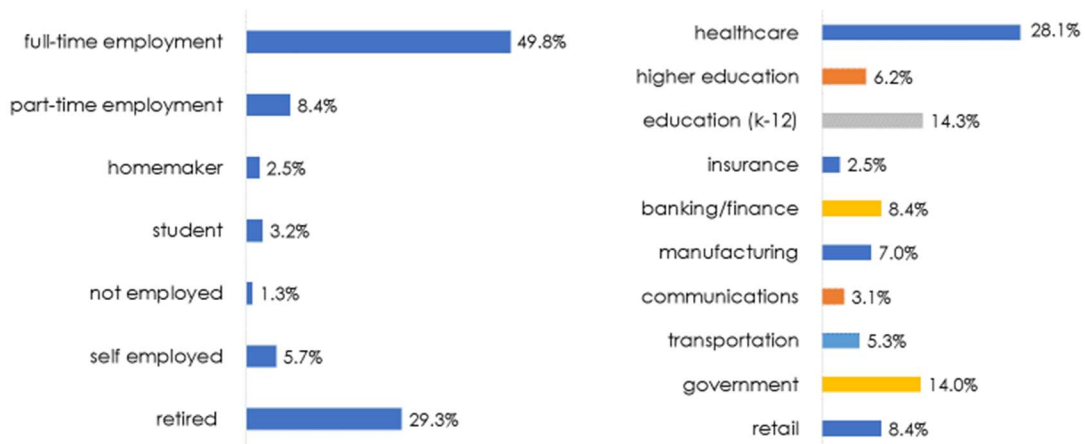


**Household Income**



Retirees make up 29.3% of the surveyed population. Half of guests are employed full-time; 7.4% part-time, and 5% self-employed. Students represent 3.2% of the surveyed guests and homemakers represent 2.5%. Top employment industries for guests include healthcare (28.1%), K-12 education (14.3%), and government (14.0%).

**Employment Status and Employment Industries**  
Percent distribution of Balloon Fiesta Guests



Balloon Fiesta guests represent diverse ethnic groups with 80.4% Caucasian/white; 12.2% Hispanic; 3.8% Native American; 2.4% African American, and 2.1% Asian American. (It is



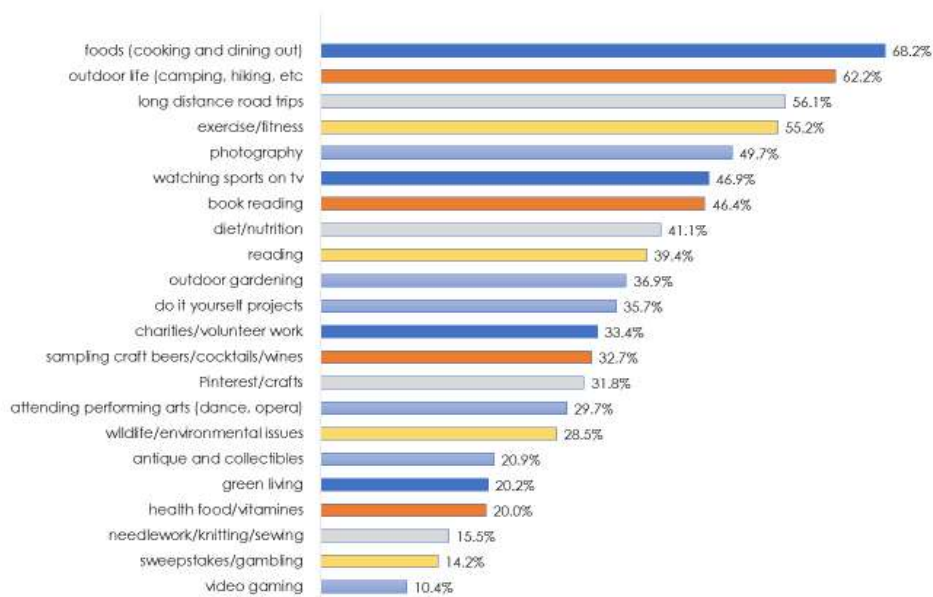
possible that non-English speaking guests are underrepresented in the survey population because of language barriers of the survey team.)

While demographics are important to know “who” your audience is, knowing the hobbies and interests of attendees can assist Balloon Fiesta with lifestyle marketing efforts. The information can also be helpful in planning suitable entertainment for attendees before, after, or in between events or even while guests wait in line. The fact is, with the ease/portability of entertainment these days, people want to be captivated at all times of the event.

Moreover, psychographics information of guests can be a critical building block for sponsorship sales. Companies and brands looking to reach enthusiastic festival guests through sponsorship need to understand not only who Balloon Fiesta reaches but also the unique habits and hobbies of the crowd. Sponsors want to know if the audience aligns with their product or brand and how they can best message consumers at the festival.

Some of the top interests and lifestyles of Balloon Fiesta guests include foodies, road trippers, and fitness and outdoor enthusiasts. Not surprisingly, half of Balloon Fiesta guests indicated photography as a hobby or interest. For over 20 years, Balloon Fiesta has claimed the title of “the most photographed event in the world” with over 25 million photographs taken over the 9 days<sup>1</sup>. While today’s smartphones and apps offer sophisticated imaging and editing capabilities, one-third of Balloon Fiesta guests continue to portray the event with a camera.

Hobbies and Interests of Balloon Fiesta Guests



<sup>1</sup> Hughes, Trevor. “Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta: The world’s most photographed event.” *USA Today*. 16 Oct. 2017. Web. 16 Oct. 2017.

The most popular sessions at Balloon Fiesta are Mass Ascensions, Balloon Glows, and fireworks. Balloon Fiesta guests are here for the food too which is present in variety and abundance. There are the standard and exotic fair foods and traditional New Mexican cuisine.

The below chart ranks Balloon Fiesta attractions by importance according to guests. The survey asks guests to rate each attraction on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being most important and 10 being not important. The percentages are based on a sum of guests rating the attraction as 1-3 (or very important). The order of attractions has ranked similarly throughout the years.

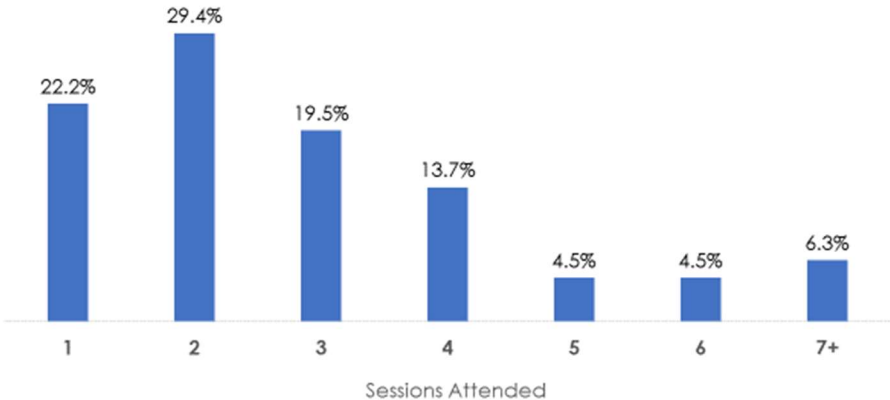
Top Attractions at Balloon Fiesta

	Importance Rating
Balloon Mass Ascensions	97.3%
Balloon Glows	90.0%
Fireworks	59.0%
Food	49.5%
Balloon flying competitions	41.9%
Exhibits	40.4%
Balloon Discovery Center	30.4%
Music Fiesta™	29.4%

Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to list "other" Balloon Fiesta attractions and amenities that are important to them. Special shapes, balloon rides, Canon tent, Gondola Club, chainsaw wood carving events, plenty of restrooms, and shade and ambiance are significant to their experience.

The excitement of Balloon Fiesta is not inflated. The event offers something for everyone and often more than guests could experience in one day. In fact, foods, souvenirs and merchandise, fine arts, music and entertainment enticed guests to attend 3.0 sessions on average in 2019.

Number of Sessions Attended by Guests



Balloon Fiesta's amenities serve to amplify the enjoyment of the vibrant balloon-filled skies. Event planners work hard to satisfy creature comforts and it's important to measure Balloon Fiesta's efforts. Most guests are satisfied through and through.

Satisfaction Ratings with Balloon Fiesta

quality of Balloon Fiesta grounds	97.1%
balloon shows	93.7%
quality and selection of food	71.5%
live entertainment/concerts	60.0%
website	75.6%

While satisfaction ratings are undoubtedly high, there is a slight decline when compared to 2017 measures. We should recognize that this year's weather conditions caused several launch and glow cancellations which likely impacted satisfaction and perceptions of guests. In addition, guests had to endure some cold mornings and high winds. Survey respondents were asked, "How would you rate your overall satisfaction of the Balloon Fiesta experience you are having today?" **92.2% of guests rated said very satisfied or satisfied!**

**Sponsorship Awareness**

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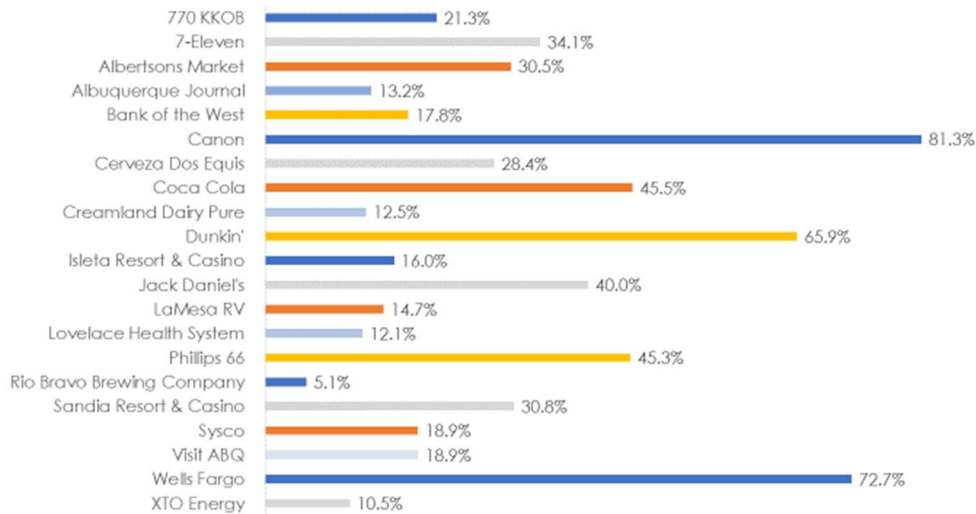
Balloon Fiesta sponsors want to know they are associated with a favorable experience – and they are! Having access to relevant audience data is also important to companies and their sponsorship marketing plan. The previous report section provides important demographics and psychographics for a captured audience so that corporate marketers can generate positive and potentially lasting consumer brand awareness and emotions.

After an event, sponsors need some measure as to how effective their efforts were and what their return on investment is. To this end, survey research tested the awareness and emotions guests formed with sponsors of Balloon Fiesta. First measured was unaided sponsorship awareness. Survey respondents were asked, "Can you list any corporate sponsors who support Balloon Fiesta?" Guests had a remarkable awareness as nearly 66.4% could identify two or more as top-of-mind corporate sponsors. Thirty-nine percent of guests could identify four or more.

Canon, the Presenting Sponsor, was identified by 63.2% of guests and was most often the first sponsor in the list and sometimes the only. Wells Fargo (39.2%), Bimbo (30.2%), Coca-Cola (29.6%), Krispy Kreme (24.8%), and Phillips 66 (19.5%) ranked on top for building strong *unaided* brand awareness through their sponsorship of Balloon Fiesta.

Next, we measured aided awareness of sponsorship. Survey respondents were presented with a list of companies/brands and asked, "Which of the following do you recognize as sponsors of Balloon Fiesta?" Canon (81.3%), Wells Fargo (72.7%), and Dunkin' (65.9%) ranked on top for aided brand recognition.

### Aided Sponsorship Awareness



Today, more than ever, we have come to appreciate and value the relationships that can be forged between individuals, organizations, and communities. When these groups collaborate to create an event as remarkable as Balloon Fiesta, it's a win for everyone. It builds community pride, social responsibility, and aids in building a loyal following for the event and sponsoring brands.

Survey research further demonstrates the combination of awareness, favorability, and effectiveness is unparalleled for Balloon Fiesta sponsors. Respondents were presented with a series of "emotional" and "attitudinal" statements pertaining to Balloon Fiesta sponsors and then asked to what level they agree or disagree. Here are their reactions:

- **Balloon Fiesta guests recognize and appreciate sponsors contributions:** The majority of guests (93.4%) *strongly agree* that corporate sponsorship makes Balloon Fiesta possible.
- **Balloon Fiesta creates passion for brands:** 87.2% of guests indicate having a positive attitude toward Balloon Fiesta sponsors because of their association.
- **Sponsorship influences brand equity and purchasing behavior:** 46.6% of guests are more likely to purchase brands from Balloon Fiesta sponsors because of their association.
- **Sponsorship is the right reach for Balloon Fiesta guests:** 60.5% of guests felt that Balloon Fiesta sponsorship is a better way to reach them than through traditional advertising.
- **Sponsorship plays a significant role in enhancing the region's image and economy:** 96% of guests feel Balloon Fiesta adds value to the region.

## Economic Impact of 2019 Balloon Fiesta

The total economic impact of 2019 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is estimated at \$186.82 million for the nine-day event. Balloon Fiesta increased the local business volume by \$109.89 million in direct impact and \$76.93 million in indirect impact.

The following chart illustrates the direct business revenue generated by non-local guests who traveled to Albuquerque to experience Balloon Fiesta. The chart provides a breakdown of revenue at local restaurants, retailers, attractions, hotels, etc. Each guest spent an estimated \$157 per day outside of Balloon Fiesta grounds.

Direct and Indirect Impact of 2019 Balloon Fiesta

Balloon Fiesta Guest spending outside of Balloon Fiesta grounds	Impact Dollars
Food and drinks at restaurants/bars	\$17,993,600
Non-festival entertainment	\$12,265,100
Retail purchases	\$18,954,700
Parking	\$1,305,100
Gasoline	\$6,907,700
Uber/other ground transportation	\$920,400
Car rental	\$7,040,700
Misc. items and services	\$2,703,300
Overnight accommodations	\$41,803,800
Direct Impact	\$109,894,400
Indirect Impact	\$76,926,080
Total Impact	\$186,820,480

Beyond the balloons, the annual Balloon Fiesta stands out for their adventurous assortment of food vendors and unique variety of merchandisers. In addition to the direct and indirect impact outlined above, Balloon Fiesta provides a lofty business opportunity for local and non-local vendors to gain exposure for their products and grow revenues. The park's Main Street covers over one-third of a mile of concessions, and there's also a juried arts and crafts tent. There is no doubt that guests come ready to spend.

The study shows that non-local guests spent an average of \$13 per person with Balloon Fiesta food and drink concessionaires and \$15 per person with artisans and retailers.

Another \$3 per person was spent on average for miscellaneous items and services which includes balloon rides.

Please note: Forward Analytics does not include the vendor revenues in the overall economic impact measure as the research was not designed to track transitory retail, which would require understanding which funds remained in Albuquerque. (e.g., does a merchandiser take their profits back to their residing state?)

### Impact on Government Revenues

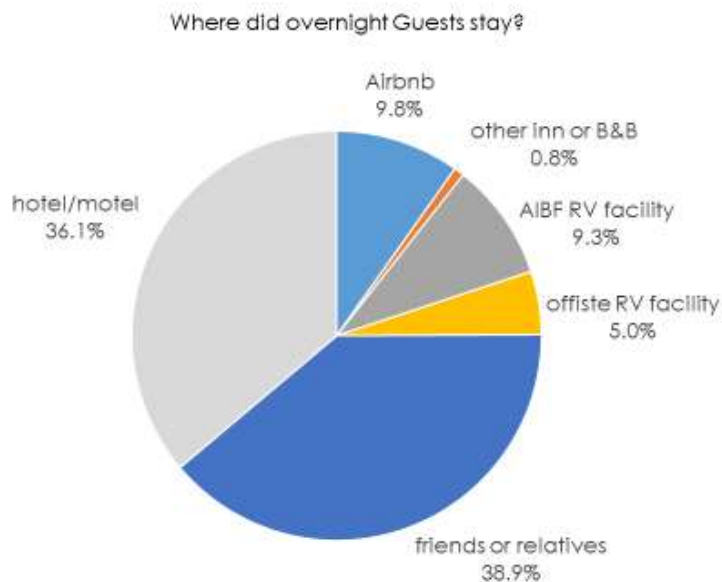
Direct spending by Balloon Fiesta guests generates substantial tax increases for the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and State of New Mexico. Government revenues come from taxes on guest spending for retail, food and drinks, overnight lodging, car rental, and gasoline.

The State of New Mexico receives an estimated \$6.52 million in tax revenues from the direct economic activity attributable to 2019 Balloon Fiesta. The City of Albuquerque gained an estimated \$4.09 million in tax revenues and Bernalillo County gained an estimated \$1.44 million. The government revenue impacts allocable to 2019 Balloon Fiesta comprise the following:

#### Lodgers Tax

Economic impact analysis measured an estimated \$41.80 million spent by Balloon Fiesta guests at overnight accommodations in Albuquerque and the nearby communities. Presently, all bookings for overnight lodging are subject to taxes including lodgers tax (6% in Albuquerque) and state and local gross receipts taxes.

Survey research determined that 36.1% of overnight Balloon Fiesta guests stayed at a hotel or motel, while 10.6% stayed at an Airbnb rental or other inn or B&B. Measured by the cost of hotel and motel accommodations and the average number of hotel/motel overnights, Balloon Fiesta generated an estimated \$2.51 million in lodgers tax for the Metro-Albuquerque area.



## **Leased Vehicle Gross Receipts Tax**

Balloon Fiesta guests spent an estimated \$7.04 million on rental cars while visiting Albuquerque. The costs include layers of different taxes and fees that are often imposed on rental car firms directly then passed along to the consumer. In addition to collecting state and local gross receipts tax, New Mexico levies a 5% surcharge on rental cars generating \$352,000 in state revenue.

## **State Gasoline Excise Tax**

Guests (non-residents) spent an estimated \$6.91 million in gasoline attributable to Balloon Fiesta. A gasoline excise tax of \$.17 per gallon generates an estimated \$531,370 for the State of New Mexico.

## **Employment Impact**

Business revenues attributable to Balloon Fiesta generated an additional \$58.99 million in New Mexico's employment wages\* when indirect impacts are considered. The additional employment wages supported an estimated 1,482 FTE jobs at an annual per capita personal income of approximately \$39,811. The most impacted industries include tourism and hospitality, but also include other employment sectors like construction, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, professional, etc.

*Please note: this study only measures the government revenues generated from the direct impact of guest spending. It does not measure the government revenues generated by the indirect impact of the event, nor does it consider revenue enhancements resulting from increased employment (i.e., income withholding and unemployment taxes).*

## **Marketing Impact**

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They don't call them festivals for nothing; it is exciting, unique and full of life. Festivals are a prime opportunity to attract tourism, boost the local economy, and generate positive media coverage.

Along with tourists, Balloon Fiesta attracts journalists, photographers, and broadcasters ready to portray the wondrous event in magazines, newspapers, and television. The total number of media representatives for 2019 Balloon Fiesta registered at 830, representing 141 media organizations. The event received international coverage spanning from China to France, India, Japan, and the Ukraine. In 2019, more than 3.4 billion impressions were generated on digital and traditional media.

Broadcast coverage (TV and radio) comprised 3,859 stories reaching an audience of 60,432,343\*\*. High profile broadcast coverage included The Weather Channel, NBC, "Good Morning America," CNN, Fox News, and CBS Sports Network, to name a few. Print

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\* Forward Analytics utilizes the Gross Employment Multiplier of 1.5368 generated by the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis to determine the employment wage impact.

\*\* Tracked through Meltwater in partnership with TVEyes, Dates: January 2019 – October 2019

and online media coverage was seen in US News & World Report, New York Post, Yahoo! News, CNN.com, and National Geographic.

With so much of the world plugged into social media, *likes* and *shares* are a powerful promotion for Balloon Fiesta and its host region. Balloon Fiesta, working closely with The Garrity Group media team, has increased and expanded their efforts to endorse the event through social media with highly shareable, in-depth videos and visuals while also including the necessary event information, FAQs, and tips. The enhanced digital stories resulted in high social echoing, or reposting, consequently increasing the reach by an incredible 1,073% on Facebook, a 3,511% increase in engagement on Twitter, and a 16% increase in Instagram followers.

In total, social media reached an audience of 13,757,162. A breakdown by Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram Analytics is below:

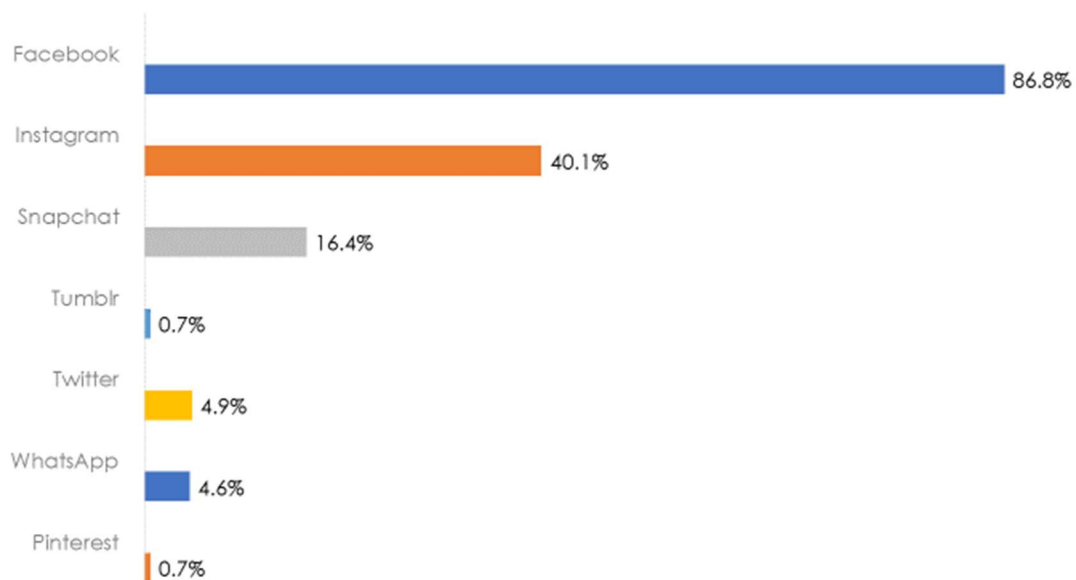
**Facebook** 192,640 followers, 290,495 engagements, total reach 3.47M

**Twitter** 1,359,007 tweet impressions, 50,844 engagements, 44,949 followers

**Instagram** 48,296 followers, 16,899 engagements, total reach 262,308

Another way to increase awareness and attendance is to make sure Balloon Fiesta guests show off their experiences to friends on social media. Pictures and video evoke emotions and generate interest and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Balloon Fiesta inspires image sharing with annual photo contests and prizes and encourages the use of the official hashtag #Balloon Fiesta. The event presents the ultimate aesthetic opportunity for guests to boast in the social community, and research shows Facebook to be the most popular site by far.

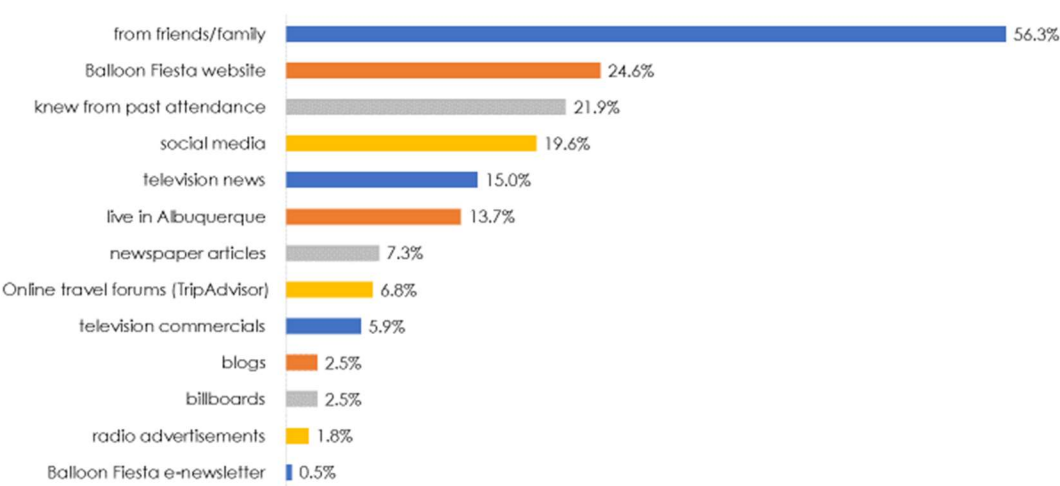
**71.2% of Balloon Fiesta Guests post on social media**





Social media is a powerful tool that has modernized word of mouth marketing with planned and targeted efforts. But people still like to share experiences and receive recommendations from their friends and family. In fact, 56.4% of Balloon Fiesta guests learned about Balloon Fiesta from the latter. Moreover, survey research and media reports prove that traditional marketing is still relevant and necessary and that guests rely on television/news and newspapers to learn about the events.

How did you learn about Balloon Fiesta and its events?



**Conclusion**

The data collected, and impact modeling performed, indicates the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is a valuable contributor to the Albuquerque and New Mexico economies. With a total impact estimated at \$186.82 million, Balloon Fiesta has a particularly strong impact that compares favorably to national sporting events, large trade shows, and political conventions.

From a purely economic standpoint, public investment in Balloon Fiesta is justified many times over. From a social standpoint, the event is an opportunity to join together and celebrate the rich culture and traditions of New Mexico as well as the state's natural beauty. Lastly, Balloon Fiesta adds to the vitality and image of Albuquerque as a great place to live and visit.