

RESULTS

COMMUNITY EVENT PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Helena Citizens' Council
June 25, 2003

Members of the Helena Citizens' Council (HCC) conducted a survey to measure Helena residents' attitudes and behaviors about current community events to determine potential interest and / or participation in future community events. Seventy (70) adult / professionals responded to the survey that included 13 HCC members.

Community Event is defined as any special gathering in a public place for the purpose of celebration, memorial, charity, remembrance, beautification, restoration, sale of crafts or produce, sports, music, or issue awareness.

PART A: Mark an "X" to indicate your response below:

1. Which community events do you currently attend?
(mark all that apply)

<u>46</u> Art Walk	<u>17</u> Jazz Fest	<u>7</u> Boat shows
<u>18</u> Old car shows	<u>36</u> Alive at Five	<u>37</u> Farmer's market
<u>6</u> Gun shows	<u>27</u> Governor's Cup	<u>23</u> Race for the Cure
<u>38</u> Stampede Fair	<u>4</u> Car racing	<u>7</u> Bicycle tours / races
<u>35</u> Festival of Trees	<u>39</u> Art & craft fairs	<u>13</u> Night to Shine
<u>42</u> Music concerts	<u>9</u> Beautification events	<u>6</u> Cemetery cleanup
<u>27</u> Sporting events	<u>32</u> Vigilante Day Parade	<u>10</u> Cardboard Regatta
<u>14</u> Race to the Sky	<u>13</u> St. Patrick's Day Parade	<u>11</u> Toys for Tots
<u>15</u> Fire tower lighting	<u>37</u> Shakespeare in the Park	<u>3</u> Holiday Helpers
<u>21</u> Other (specify): <u>Various categories.</u>		

2. Do you currently volunteer to sponsor / staff / finance community events?

34 **Yes** 36 **No**

3. How do you feel about the number of community events by season?

	NOT ENOUGH	JUST RIGHT	TOO MANY	NOT SURE
Summer	<u>11</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>
Fall	<u>16</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>
Winter	<u>38</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Spring	<u>27</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>

4. For what reasons do you feel community events should be sponsored?
(mark your **top 2 choices** only)

<u>36</u> Charitable benefits	<u>17</u> Generate business	<u>2</u> Commemorative
<u>35</u> Provide entertainment	<u>16</u> Community Pride	<u>0</u> Religious
<u>0</u> Sports competition	<u>7</u> Educational / Schools	<u>3</u> Tourism

0 Other (specify): No responses.

5. What INDOOR locations do you prefer for community events?
(mark all that apply)

<u>64</u> Civic Center	<u>14</u> Capital Hill Mall	<u>48</u> Myrna Loy
<u>26</u> Grandstreet Theater	<u>5</u> Hotel / Motel	<u>19</u> Capitol Rotunda
<u>27</u> Fairgrounds	<u>5</u> Restaurants	<u>5</u> Gov. Buildings

7 Other (specify): Various indoor places.

6. What OUTDOOR locations do you prefer for community events?
(mark all that apply)

<u>32</u> Fairgrounds	<u>31</u> Performance Park	<u>19</u> Spring Meadow
<u>58</u> Walking Mall	<u>37</u> Great Northern Center	<u>34</u> Memorial Park
<u>40</u> Downtown Area	<u>4</u> Bill Roberts Golf Course	<u>14</u> Centennial Park

7 Other (specify): Various outdoor places.

PART B: Respond to each statement by circling the answer that best describes your feeling about that statement.

(1) Helena has the right number and variety of community events.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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SCORE: 9	33	10	18	2
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(2) Helena should have more community events.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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SCORE: 6	35	24	5	0
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(3) Memorial Park should be used more frequently for community events.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SCORE: 6		32	22	5	1

(4) Helena should schedule more “clean up” and “work day” events.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SCORE: 6		33	26	2	2

(5) Helena would benefit from a single event with the theme of “Community Pride.”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SCORE: 3		22	16	22	7

(6) Helena would benefit from a balance of events serving various interests that results in community pride.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SCORE: 15		42	8	2	0

PART C: Read the statement below. Would you support this event?

What: An annual community event.

When: Christmas season (winter). Daytime and evening activities.

Where: Memorial Park.

Why: To promote community pride.

Discussion: The event would consist of various activities and performances over the course of several days. Activities may include lighting of park trees; street vendors; craft sales; children games; laser shows; sleigh rides; snow sculpture competitions; etc. Band shell performances may include local chorus and music groups from area schools and / or from the public; literature readings; plays / vignettes; etc. Tree lights would remain on for a period of time to showcase Helena’s community spirit.

47 Yes 22 No

PART D: Compilation of additional comments:

- Events associated with Memorial Park are colored by a patriotic theme. This is true because of the illuminated Big Flag, Iraq war, and veteran focus.
- Walking Mall is a more appropriate location for winter events. This location features a balanced venue, i.e., a non-religious, non-patriotic, culturally diverse location.
- Walking Mall has more amenities, such as shelter, refreshments, entertainment, etc.
- Community pride is defined as public participation in a variety of events over time, rather than a single event that attempts to generate community pride.
- Community pride drives events – events do not manufacture community pride. Stay away from any ‘pride’ event theme and support current community events.
- Local businesses need to be included in sponsoring any event – especially if it is to be successful as an annual event.
- A winter evening event could be a coordinated effort to have area chorus groups perform neighborhood caroling with residents encouraged to welcome carolers with festive lighting and treats. The evening may end with a community concert at Memorial Park followed by activities at local businesses.
- A festive light display all around the downtown area would be neat in winter / holiday season to walk around in and enjoy shopping and restaurants.
- Art walk is fun, although it could use more art displays.
- Wish we could get people together to clean-up alleys.
- Late fall & winter compete with other activities like hunting.
- A future event must have general or universal appeal in the theme / format, and probably should not detract from other events already held annually.
- An event calendar would be nice to get in the mail to see events throughout the year. I believe you can incorporate community pride into the already existing events.
- Really like the Governor’s Cup event.
- Art Walk is fun, but it seems to need a bit more art associated with existing vendors.
- Something around Christmas would be good. I would prefer it associated with the downtown and not Memorial Park.

- I think Helena would benefit from a community Pride event during the winter season.
- Having a large, purely secular Christmas time event may irritate certain groups who feel their church-focused activities (keep Christ in Christmas) are being threatened.
- I think Helena needs a sports complex to host events.
- The downtown area walking mall and the adjacent blocks are the gem of the city. This area should be promoted and any new event should take place downtown.
- 'Pride' has a negative connotation with me. It rings of a thinly veiled patriotism and flag waving, while only approving of a narrow sunset of values & individuals.
- We need some winter, indoor events that are not just for drinking alcohol. Some quality concerts would be ideal. The Myrna Loy used to be great for having 3 or 4 good concerts per year.
- While I would support this type of event, we need to be careful not to build our biggest events all around Judeo/Christian holidays. Helena is a diverse community of religious beliefs. We should be respectful of that. The summer with its good weather and focus on family time might be better for a large-scale, "community pride" event.
- I think the best events are those that combine a range of interests. A series of events or a large-scale event that combines art and music with charitable benefits is usually the most successful and well received type of event. This is also the type of event that builds a health and active community interested in giving back and making their city a better place to live.
- The above event described doesn't really sound any different from other events around Xmas. During this time there is already craft fairs, and sleigh rides when they do the lighting of the fire tower. What would be a nice holiday/winter event - maybe early December is a holiday stroll down on the walking mall on a Friday evening. The entire area is blocked off to traffic, there are local bands, chorus, music groups at each end or corner playing holiday music, there are street vendors, all shops, eateries and bars have doors open for evening. This should last much longer than 6-9pm. What about 5-11pm for shops and eateries and street vendors.
- What about an event in the fall downtown also. Trying to think of fall events, and all I can come up with is Oktoberfest and the fall Artwalk. Same kind of idea above, block off area in walking mall on Saturday. All businesses open for shopping, one theme, a chili contest or soup contest, something like this. All vendors are only serving the chili or soup, you buy a cup for \$2-\$5, walk around and get to taste all the food you want for that price, vote at designated voting areas for a contest winner, winner gets some type of cash prize and rest of money goes to city (or whoever). Shop downtown at established stores, no other vendors trying to sell you stuff. Music playing throughout the day and the a couple bands that night. The parks can have things for the kids, bouncers, clowns, pumpkin carving contest, face painting, etc. Maybe the children's part is sponsored and setup by specific groups. They can charge for certain things.

- I would like the community to look at Friday night activities that cater to families or under 21. also, new years eve Missoula has a really nice family event downtown that we could model after called “First Night”. Carroll College is a great island in our community - lets build bridges. Also, post the lecture series more than the day of the event.
- Definition of community pride should include participation in ‘non-event’ type of community activities such as volunteering to work at Humane Society; meal-on-wheels; etc. A town/county roadside clean-up day would be worth-while ‘community-pride’ event.
- Helena is slowly causing the decline in community events as costs increase at the Civic Center for no increase in services.
- Helena is not consistent in how it treats groups. An effort should be made to retain events for the community, like Race for the Sky and Helena Railroad Fair.
- More signage around parking garage could help direct people to them, reducing congestion.
- Helena planning could help reduce visitor and resident frustration by coordinating road activities to reduce congestion.
- What about a “First Night” event like Missoula and Great Falls have? (non-alcoholic, family-oriented activity that can stretch from walking mall down to Great Northern).
- Community pride is evident by all the participation in area food drives, Toys for Tots, Farm in the Dell, etc events. Also volunteerism and donations to Food Share, Salvation Army, Goodwill, Good Samaritan, United Way, Red Cross, etc. There doesn’t have to be an “Event” to measure community pride – just look around.
- I’d really like to see Helena gear up for the Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration.
- An Earth day event would be good.
- Expand the Farmer’s Market by having local restaurants showcase their foods and live music, baked goods, etc.
- In December have a special Christmas market featuring hand crafts with food drinks, art, Christmas music, lighting, etc. This is very popular in Europe.
- Horse racing track event at the fairgrounds. A Scottish festival and games with high quality Canadian and US pipe bands, competitions, clan / family, genealogy, games, imported food and drinks.
- Sponsor more free concerts in the Memorial band shell.
- It is neat exposing my children to Helena’s community events. I learned that if you take them young, they will continue to go as adults. I’d like to see more youth involved in community events.

- So many events happen in June. Then with the exception of an event or two spread throughout the year, there is little else. Winter needs some attention. It is this time of the year that gets monotonous. Some more community events would be great in the winter.
- I generally do not attend activities at Memorial park. The parking is terrible and the playground equipment is too close to the road. I am not comfortable with my children being so close to vehicles and busy roads.
- I love Alive at Five and the Blue Grass Festival and the MT Helena Music Festival and the Crawfish Festival.
- The only recommendation I have would be a spring kick-off type of celebration – one that's not too formal. Maybe like Oktoberfest – an March-o-fest?
- I enjoy going and supporting community events in Helena. I strongly feel the community would benefit from more family events as well as adult events. There are a lot of events that include alcohol, but nothing for kids.
- I feel the community would benefit and profit from concerts by famous musicians. Helena would benefit from a new rotunda or dome for concerts.
- I'd like to see more concerts with better quality acts. How do smaller counties get bigger musicians to perform at their county fairs?
- I like the arts movement going on in Helena. The Western Writers of America Conference is the latest in the artistic renaissance going on in Helena.
- If this event were to happen, it would be nice to have the schools, bands, chorus, and orchestra's to participate in this activity. I would volunteer to help.
- I believe there should be more events and I feel that these would benefit the community. I think Alive at Five is great and it is great to see community members involved.
- Helena presently has a good variety of community events.
- HCC should not be responsible for planning event – only supporting such an event.
- I think this proposed event is a great concept. I would broadened it to include sleigh rides, ice skating, ice sculptures, etc. Of course, these would be reliant upon cold weather and some snow. Perhaps this "winter carnival" could have a flexible schedule of events to allow for mother nature.
- Not enough events for children and youth under age 21.
- Return Farmer's Market to Memorial Park. More events at Fairgrounds – better parking. Not to make walking mall accessible to vehicles – becomes a safety issue.

- I am extremely involved in the community and volunteer many hours each year to various enterprises. While I could support an event such as the proposed event, my counter question might be: “What can Helena do to increase the participation of it existing events, thus increasing the overall success of those events?”
- We need to involve high school and middle school children more.
- The biggest obstacles is access for the elderly with physical challenges, small children, and adequate parking. Otherwise, the events I attend have been enjoyable and continuously improving in quality.
- Is there room for another winter event? One that is dependent on snow? Spring clean-up fair would be ok – like an Expo or something.

END OF SURVEY RESULTS