

# 2017 Sandcastle Days Survey and Economic Impact Analysis



Prepared for  
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October 2017

The University of Texas  
Rio Grande  
Valley



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# Highlights

- Sandcastle Days attracts a mix of persons who have been to the event before (56%), and persons who were attending the event for the first time (44%). The average number of years persons have been to Sandcastle Days was 4.2 years.
- The majority of groups, 61% came with other adults and no children, suggesting older adults and couples without children. The average number of persons per group was 3.7 persons.
- The family-friendly event also attracted groups with kids under 18, such as families. Almost forty percent (39%) of the groups brought kids under 18 with them. For groups who brought kids, the average number of kids per group was 2.2.
- The majority of attendees at Sandcastle Days were from the Rio Grande Valley (68%). Six percent of attendees (6%) were local residents from South Padre Island. Twenty-five percent (25%) were from outside the Rio Grande Valley. And one percent (1%) were from Mexico.
- Almost half of the persons attending Sandcastle Days (49%) said they stayed overnight at the island. Most of the attendees stayed overnight in a hotel/motel (56%) or a condo/house (41%). The average number of nights stayed per group was 2.8 nights.
- Spending by group depended on where the group had traveled from and if they stayed overnight. The average amount spent per group attending Sandcastle Days was \$382.
- Word-of-mouth (26%) and Facebook (23%) were the highest ways attendees heard about Sandcastle Days. The rest of the attendees heard of Sandcastle Days through advertising in traditional media including newspaper (15%), television (15%) and radio (5%).
- The majority of persons attending rated Sandcastle Days highly. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “Not at all Satisfied” and 10 being “Extremely Satisfied”, attendees on average gave Sandcastle Days a 9.1 rating.
- Suggestions on how to improve the event centered on making the event bigger. Attendees (13.8%) want to see more competitors and sandcastles. They would like to see more shade/umbrellas (10.3%). Some attendees felt the event space was too small and wanted more space (3.4%). And attendees want to see more activities for kids (3.4%).
- Sandcastle Days generates an estimated \$2.0 million in spending by the event organizer and the attendees. Through the multiplier effect, this spending has a total economic impact of \$3.0 million on the local economy, supports 30 jobs with employee compensation of \$825,586, and generates \$309,246 in tax revenues.

# Introduction

The 30th Annual Sandcastle Days was held from October 4-8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at Clayton's Beach Bar and Grill on South Padre Island. Sandcastle Days features an amateur and professional sandcastle building competition, vendors, music, and kid activities. The event was free.

Sandcastle Days started 30 years ago as a way to demonstrate the magical sculpting qualities of South Padre Island sand and the critical importance of protecting the beautiful coastal shores. Over the years the family-fun event has grown from a local celebration to qualifying event for the World Championships of Sand Sculpting. An estimated 20,000 persons attended Sandcastle Days in 2017 according to the event organizer.

The South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau (SPI CVB) contracted the Data and Information Services Center (DISC) at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to conduct an intercept survey of persons attending Sandcastle Days to find out: Who attends Sandcastle Days? Where are they from? How old are they? How much do they spend? How did they hear about the event? Did they stay overnight? If so, what type of accommodation did they stay at? How satisfied are they with the event? And how can the event be improved.

The SPI CVB and the event organizer intends to use the results of the survey to evaluate sponsorship of the event, evaluate advertising dollars being spent, gather suggestions on ways to improve the event, and estimate the economic impact of the event for South Padre Island.

# Methodology

## What is an Intercept Survey?

An intercept survey is a survey done on the street, in shopping malls, at retail outlets, at festivals/events, or in any space where there is a population of target consumers. The surveys are conducted by trained interviewers who conduct a survey to gather data regarding a consumer's demographics, behavior, habits, preference, perceptions, and comments.

## Persons Surveyed

The general public attending Sandcastle Days, 18 years and older, were surveyed. Screening questions were asked to screen out persons under the age of 18, and workers, volunteers, vendors, and sponsors at the event. A total of 203 attendees were surveyed.

## Days/Dates of Surveying

Surveys were conducted on Saturday, 10/7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Survey Method

Face-to-face interviews were conducted by UTRGV students using iPads. Surveyors were stationed at high traffic points at the entrance of Clayton's and on the beach in the competition area. Attendees completing the survey were given promotional items from the SPI CVB, including sunglasses, headphones, squeeze balls, and suntan lotion.

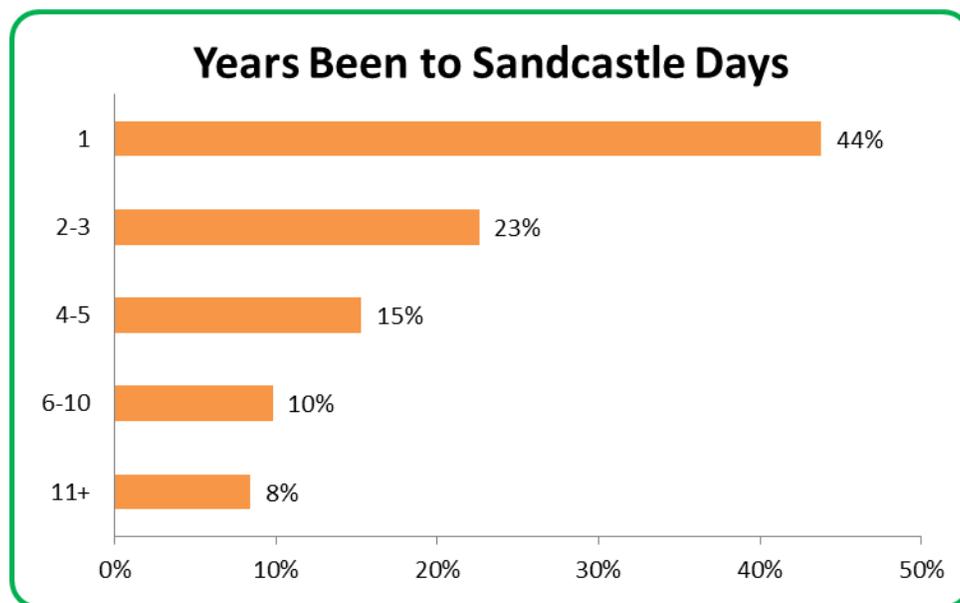
## Interviewers

UTRGV students were trained and used as surveyors. A UTRGV staff person was present on the grounds during the event to monitor and supervise the surveyors, place the surveyors at surveying locations and collect the completed surveys on the iPads.

# Results

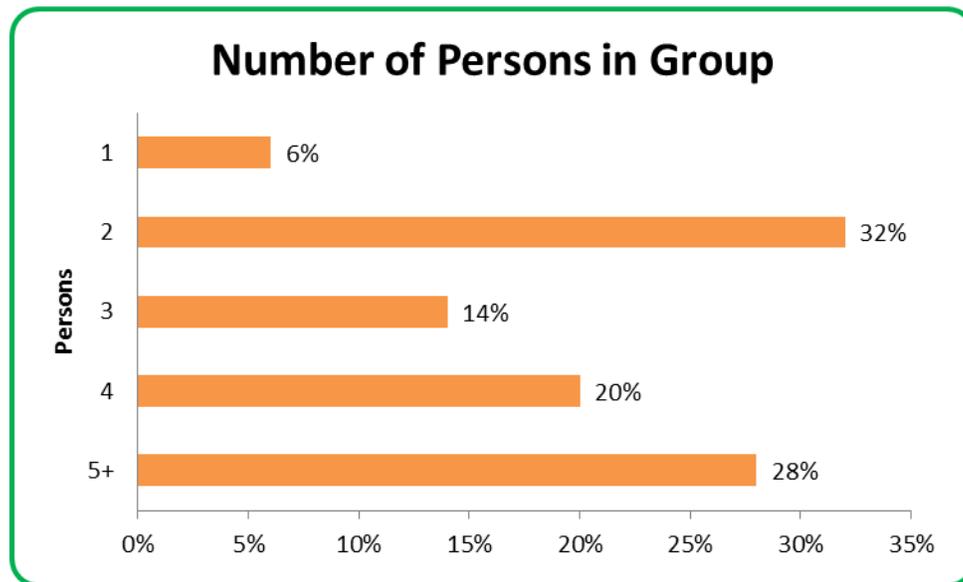
## How many years have you attended Sandcastle Days?

2017 marked the 30th year of Sandcastle Days. The event attracts a mix of persons who have been to the event before, and persons who were attending Sandcastle Days for the first time. Keeping people coming back to the event is important to building a following and base of attendees. Over half of the persons surveyed (56%) said they have been to Sandcastle Days before. Attracting first timers to Sandcastle Days is important to exposing new people and increasing attendance to the event. Forty-four percent (44%) of the persons surveyed said it was their first time at Sandcastle Days. The average number of years persons have been to Sandcastle Days was 4.2 years.



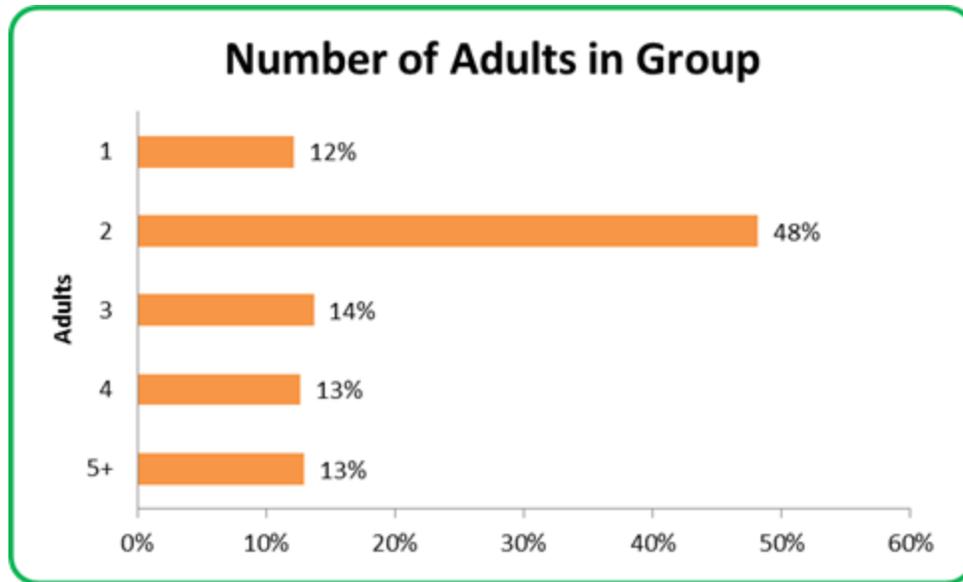
### How many persons in group?

Attendees were asked how many people they came with to determine if individuals, couples, families, or large groups attend Sandcastle Days. From the survey results, the event is attracting all types: individuals, couples, families, and large groups. The most common group size was two persons. Nearly a third, or thirty-two percent (32%) of the persons surveyed said they came with another person. Thirty-four percent (34%) reported they came with a group of three to four persons. And twenty-eight percent (28%) said they came with a group of 5 or more persons. The average number of persons per group was 3.7 persons.



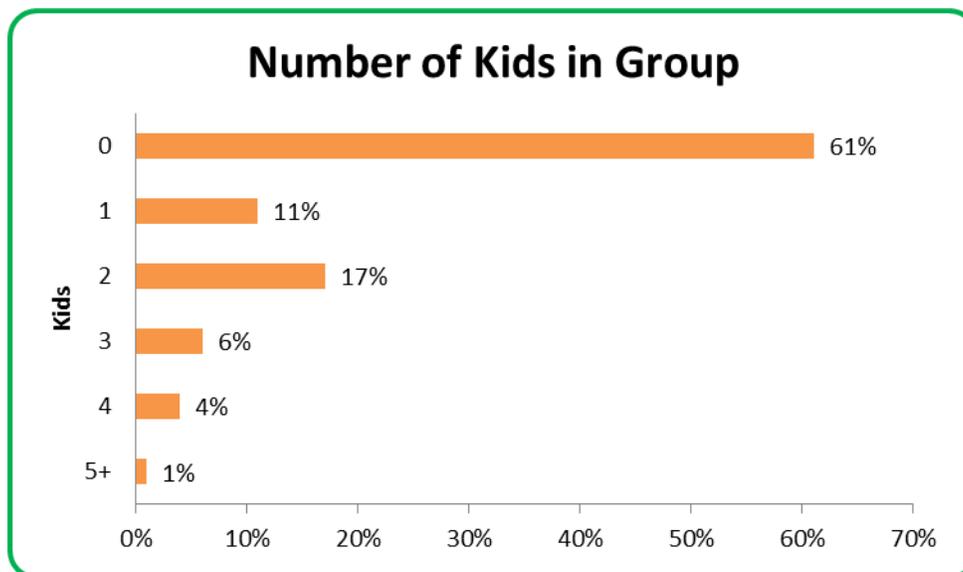
### How many adults in group?

Persons were asked how many adults and kids came with them to determine the mixture of adults and children in the group at the event. From the survey results, the majority of groups, 61% came with other adults and no children, suggesting older adults and couples without children. The average number of adults per group was 2.8 adults.



### How many kids in group?

However, the family-friendly event also attracted groups with kids under 18, such as families. Almost forty percent (39%) of the groups brought kids under 18 with them. For groups who brought kids, the average number of kids per group was 2.2.



## Zip code

Attendees were asked for the zip code of their residence to determine where they were from. The majority of attendees at Sandcastle Days are from the Rio Grande Valley. Sixty-eight percent of the attendees (68%) gave a zip code in the Rio Grande Valley. Six percent of attendees (6%) were local residents from South Padre Island. Twenty-five percent (25%) were from outside the Rio Grande Valley including several cities in Texas, such as San Antonio (4.1%), Austin (2.0%), San Marcos (1.5%), Dallas (1.0%) and several other Texas cities. One percent of the attendees were from Mexico including Matamoros and Reynosa, Mexico.

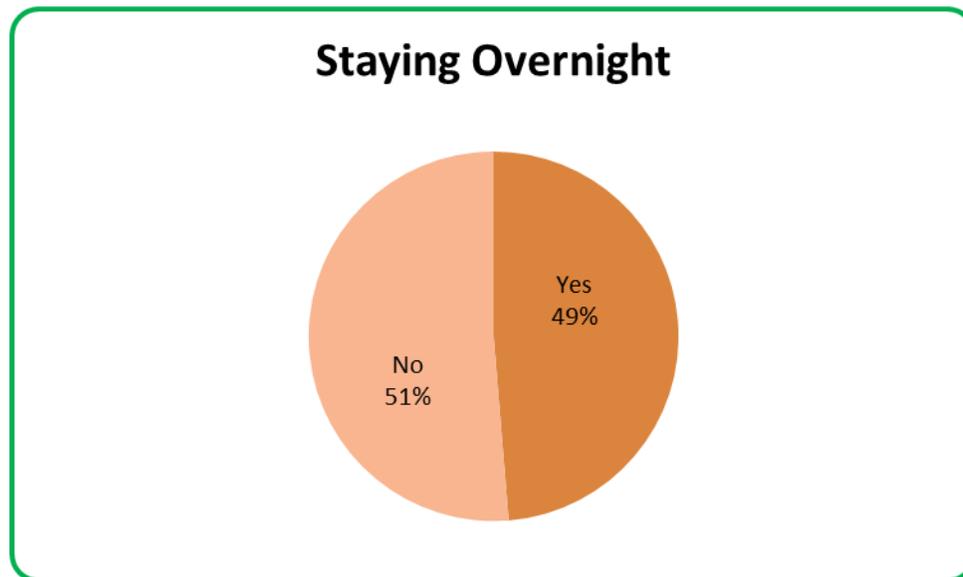
<b>Zip Code</b>	<b>%</b>
Rio Grande Valley	68.0
South Padre Island	6.0
Outside RGV (USA)	25.0
Mexico	1.0
Total	100.0

<b>City of Residence</b>	<b>%</b>
Brownsville, TX	17.3%
McAllen, TX	10.7%
Harlingen, TX	10.2%
South Padre Island, TX	6.1%
Mission, TX	5.6%
Edinburg, TX	5.6%
Weslaco, TX	5.1%
San Antonio, TX	4.1%
Pharr, TX	2.0%
Austin, TX	2.0%
San Benito, TX	1.5%
San Marcos, TX	1.5%
Los Fresnos, TX	1.0%
Lyford, TX	1.0%
Mercedes, TX	1.0%
San Juan, TX	1.0%
Donna, TX	1.0%
Dallas, TX	1.0%

Kerrville, TX	1.0%
New Braunfels, TX	1.0%
Alamo, TX	0.5%
Alice, TX	0.5%
Alton, TX	0.5%
Aransas Pass, TX	0.5%
Arizona	0.5%
Arlington, TX	0.5%
Balch Springs, TX	0.5%
College Station, TX	0.5%
Conroe, TX	0.5%
Edcouch, TX	0.5%
Elsa, TX	0.5%
Fort Stockton, TX	0.5%
Fort Worth, TX	0.5%
Greely, CO	0.5%
Haleyville, AL	0.5%
Haltom City, TX	0.5%
Houston, TX	0.5%
Jarrell, TX	0.5%
Kansas City, MO	0.5%
Kenedy, TX	0.5%
Louisiana	0.5%
La Feria, TX	0.5%
La Mills, IA	0.5%
La Villa, TX	0.5%
Lenexa, KS	0.5%
Martindale, TX	0.5%
Matamoras, MX	0.5%
Penitas, TX	0.5%
Pipe Creek, TX	0.5%
Plano, TX	0.5%
Port Isabel, TX	0.5%
Raymondville, TX	0.5%
Reynosa, MX	0.5%
Robstown, TX	0.5%
San Augustin, TX	0.5%
San Perlita, TX	0.5%
Sapulpa, OK	0.5%
Sugar Land, TX	0.5%
Veradale, WA	0.5%
Angleton, TX	0.5%

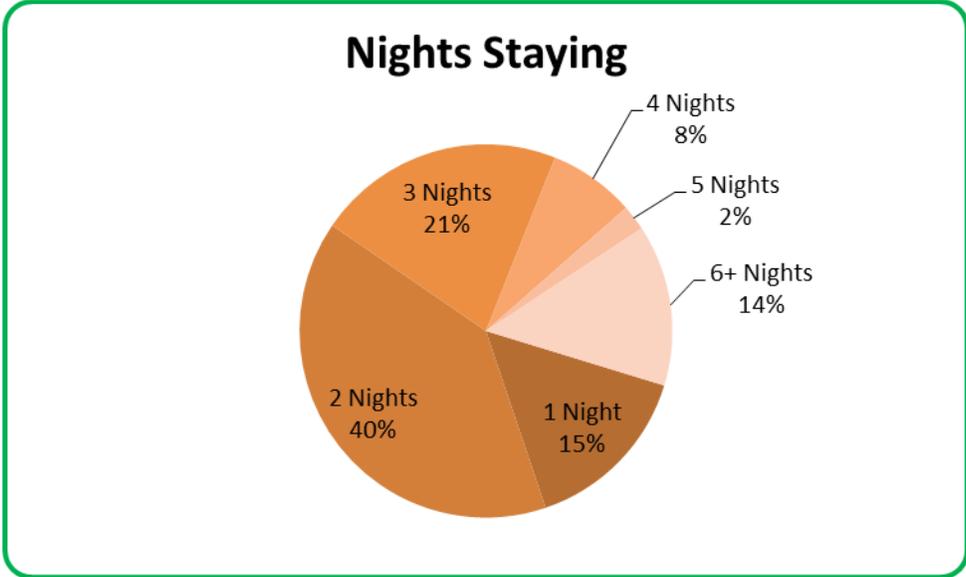
### Stayed Overnight on Island?

Events that generate overnight stays have a greater economic impact on the economy as attendees stay at hotels/motels, homes/condos and RV/campgrounds and spend money on restaurants, retail goods, and entertainment/activities on the island, generating sales for local businesses and hotel and occupancy taxes and sales taxes for the city. Almost half of the persons attending Sandcastle Days (49%) said they stayed overnight at the island during their stay. Slightly more than half of the attendees, or fifty-one percent (51%), were day visitors, who attended the event, but did not stay overnight.



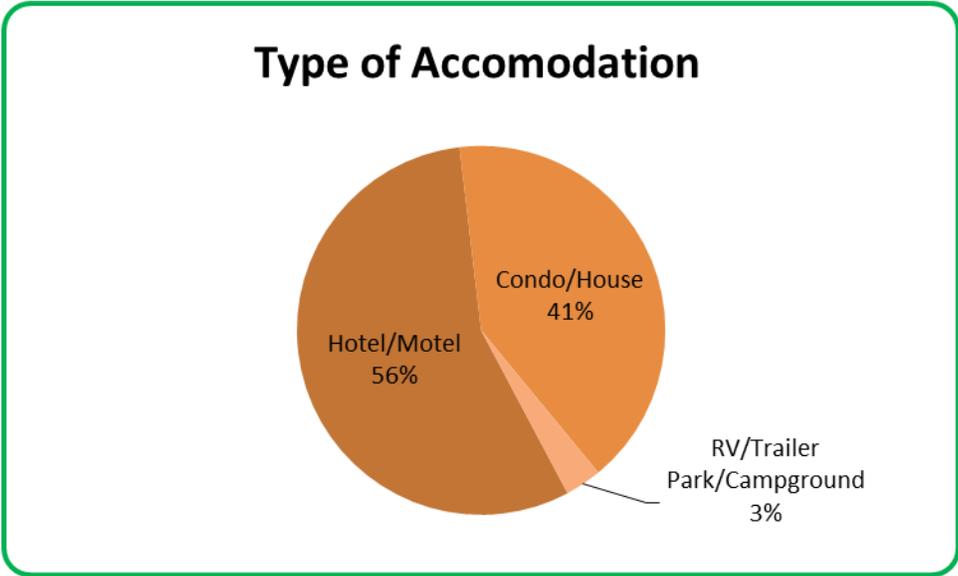
### Number of Nights Stayed?

The majority of attendees who stayed overnight, stayed one to three nights on the island. Over three quarters, or seventy-six percent (76%) stayed one night (15%), two nights (40%), or three nights (21%). The average number of nights stayed per group for those that stayed overnight was 2.8 nights.



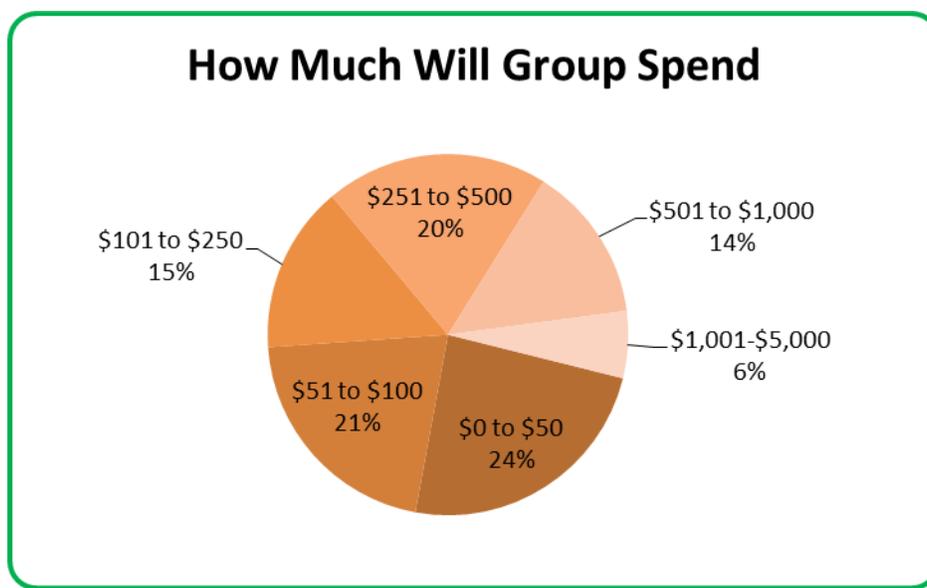
**Type of Accommodation Stayed At?**

Those groups staying overnight were asked what type of accommodation they stayed at. Most of the attendees stayed overnight in a hotel/motel or a condo/house. Hotel/motel accounted for fifty-six percent (56%) of the overnight stays, and condo/house represented forty-one percent (41%) of the overnight stays. A small percentage of attendees, three percent (3%), stayed at a RV/campground.



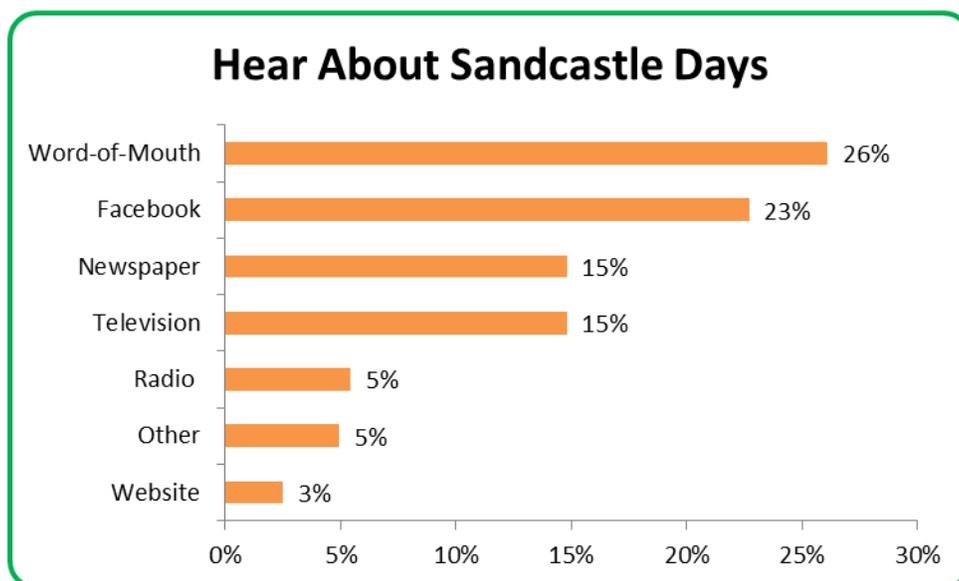
### How much money will your group spend?

Spending by group depended on where the group had traveled from and if they stayed overnight. Day visitors spent less than those attendees who stayed overnight. Forty-five percent of the attendees spent less than \$100 while attending Sandcastle Days. These were day visitors. The rest of the attendees that stayed overnight spent over \$100 during their stay, depending on the number of nights stayed. The average amount spent per group attending Sandcastle Days was \$382.



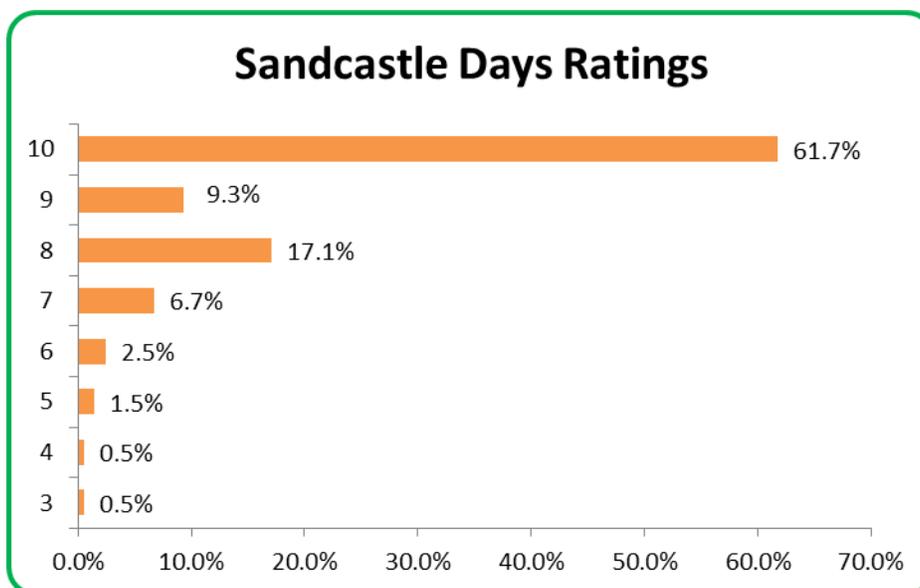
### How did you hear about Sandcastle Days?

Attendees were asked how they heard about Sandcastle Days. Word-of-mouth and Facebook were the highest ways attendees heard about Sandcastle Days. Twenty-six percent (26%) said they heard about Sandcastle Days through word-of-mouth from friends/family/relatives/others. Twenty-three percent (23%) said they heard of Sandcastle Days through Facebook. The rest of the attendees heard of Sandcastle Days through advertising in traditional media including newspaper (15%), television (15%) and radio (5%), which together accounted for thirty-five percent (35%).



### Satisfaction with Sandcastle Days?

Overwhelmingly, the majority of persons attending rated their experience at Sandcastle Days highly. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "Not at all Satisfied" and 10 being "Extremely Satisfied", attendees on average gave Sandcastle Days a 9.1 rating. Sixty-two percent (62%) gave Sandcastle Days the highest rating of 10. However, there is room for improvement at the event as twelve percent (12%) of the attendees rated Sandcastle Days a 7 or lower.



### How can Sandcastle Days be improved?

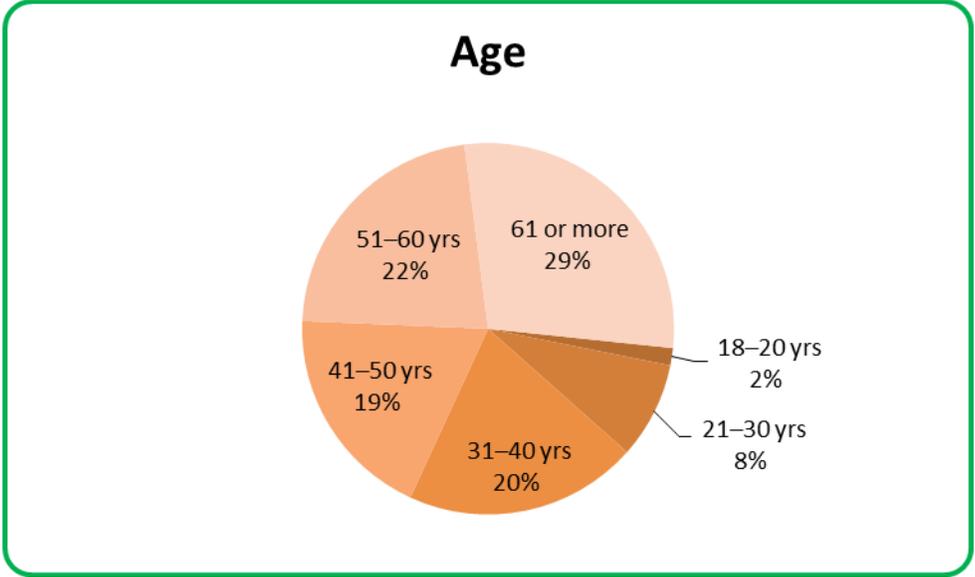
Fifty-two percent (52%) of the attendees gave suggestions on how to improve Sandcastle Days when asked. Most of the suggestions on how to improve the event centered on making the event bigger. Attendees (13.8%) want to see more competitors and sandcastles at the event. Attendees would also like to see more shade/umbrellas (10.3%). Some attendees felt the event space was too small and wanted more space (3.4%). And attendees with kids want to see more activities for kids (3.4%).

Suggestions to Improve Sandcastle Days	%
More competitors and sandcastles	13.8%
More shade/umbrellas	10.3%
Bigger space for the event	3.4%
More kid activities/games	3.4%
More advertisements	2.5%
Check tides	2.0%
More vendors	2.0%
More chairs on beach/seating	1.5%
More music	1.5%
More parking	1.5%
Cheaper costing bottled water	1.0%

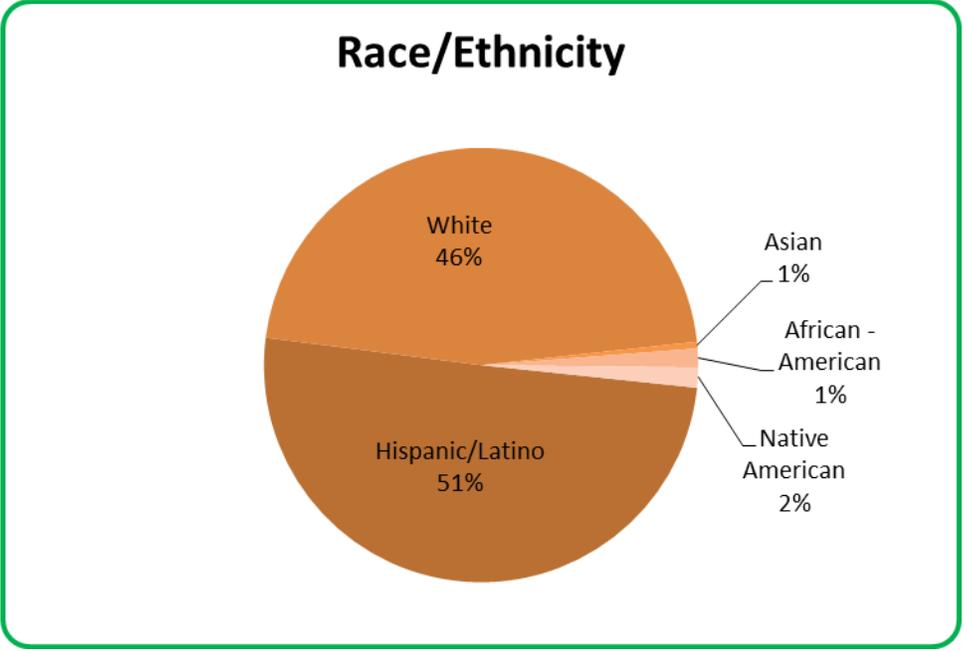
Free beer, free food	1.0%
Drink specials	1.0%
More sand/beach	1.0%
Air conditioning	0.5%
Don't charge for beach chairs	0.5%
Dance music	0.5%
Extend event time	0.5%
Have bar open with event hours	0.5%
Ice water	0.5%
Allow ice chests	0.5%
Let people know how to vote for sandcastles	0.5%
Move event back to south side of island	0.5%
More light for night time viewing	0.5%
Misting devices	0.5%
More beer variety	0.5%
More food vendors	0.5%
More funding for event	0.5%
Make competition area handicap accessible	0.5%
More information on website	0.5%
Clean up the seaweed	0.5%
Provide an entrance from the beach	0.5%
Sandcastle building workshops	0.5%

# Attendee Profile

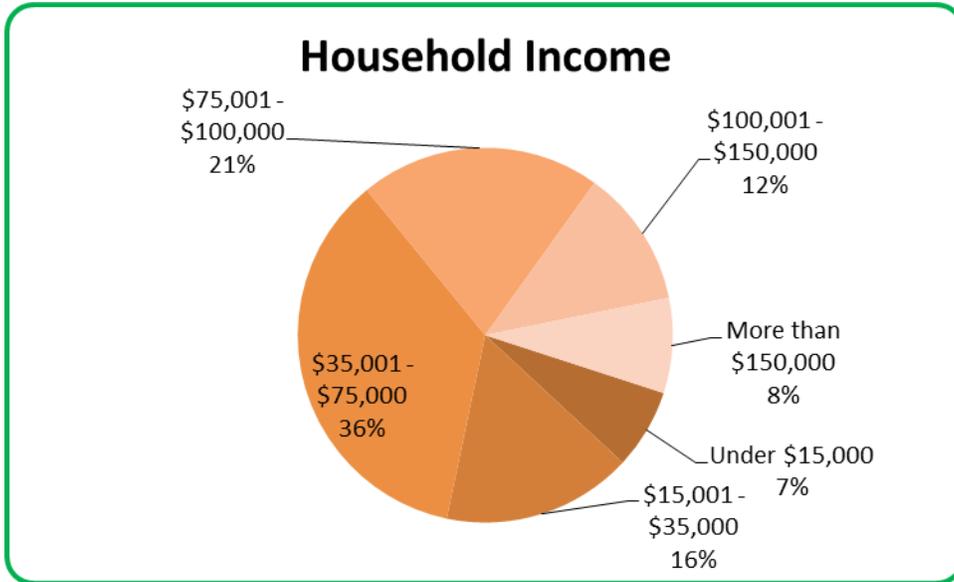
## Age (average age = 50 years old)



## Race/Ethnicity



Household income



## Economic Impact

This analysis estimates the economic impact of Sandcastle Days on the local economy.

The analysis is based on IMPLAN, an input-output model which embodies the connections between industries in the region and household and governmental activities. The data used for the model is for Cameron County. Total expenditures related to Sandcastle Days amounted to \$2.0 million. Total expenditures included operating expenses to host the event and spending by attendees.

<b>Sandcastle Days Expenditures</b>	
Event Organizer Expenditures	\$60,000
Attendee Spending	\$1,943,717
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,003,717</b>

<b>Attendee Spending Calculation</b>	
Average group size	3.7 persons
Average spending per group	\$382.54
Total attendees	20,000 persons
Less Local Residents (South Padre Island)	18,800 persons
Groups	5,081 groups
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>\$1,943,717</b>

When total expenditures are inputted into the IMPLAN model it produces indirect and induced effects through the multiplier effect. The total economic impact is the sum of the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of expenditures made during Sandcastle Days. The total output or economic impact of Sandcastle Days on the local economy was \$3.0 million. Spending related to the Sandcastle Days supports the creation of 30 jobs and employee compensation of \$825,586.

The model also estimates indirect business taxes, based on historical data. The data should be viewed as an approximation, rather than a detailed fiscal analysis. The model does not separate local and state taxes because the structure of local government finances is rapidly changing. The model estimates that \$309,246 in tax revenues was generated by the Sandcastle Days.

<b>Economic Impact of Sandcastle Days</b>				
	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
Total Output	\$2,003,717	\$551,277	\$473,671	\$3,028,665
Value Added	\$1,118,406	\$247,357	\$254,259	\$1,620,022
Employment	21	5	4	30
Employee Compensation	\$530,626	\$152,369	\$142,592	\$825,586
Taxes				\$309,246

Source: IMPLAN data model outputs for Cameron County based on Sandcastle Days data, DISC.

# 2017 Sandcastle Days Survey

Hi, we are doing a survey for Sandcastle Days. May I ask you a few questions?

- 1) Are you under 18 years old? *(ask if you are not sure person is over 18) (if YES, end survey)*
- 2) Are you a volunteer, sponsor, competitor, or vendor at Sandcastle Days? *(if YES, end survey)*

1. Including this year, how many years have you been to Sandcastle Days? \_\_\_\_\_ years

2. Including yourself, how many persons came with your GROUP?

Persons?            0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

Adults?            0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

Kids < 18?        0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

3. What city did you travel from? What is the zip code?

Brownsville, TX 78530-78526, Edinburg, TX 78539-78541, Harlingen, TX 78550-78553, McAllen, TX 78501-78505, Mission, TX 78572-78574, Pharr, TX 78577, South Padre Island, TX 78597 *(if SPI, SKIP to Q8), Other (enter Zip Code)*

4. Are you staying overnight on the island? Yes, No *(Skip to Q7)*

5. How many nights are you staying? 1 night, 2 nights, 3 nights, 4 nights, 5 nights, Other *(enter text)*

6. What type of accomodation or place are you staying at? Hotel/Motel, Condo/House, RV/Trailer Park/Campground, Other *(enter text)*

7. How much money will your GROUP spend at the island during your stay for food/meals, retail goods, gas/transportation, and entertainment/activities? \_\_\_\_\_ dollars

8. How did you hear about Sandcastle Days? *(pick many)* Been Here Before, Facebook, Newspaper Ad, Radio Ad, Sandcastle Days website, Television Ad, Word-of-Mouth, Other *(enter text)*

9. How satisfied are you with Sandcastle Days. 1= Not At All Satisfied, 10= Extremely Satisfied.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How can Sandcastle Days be improved?

11. What is your race/ethnicity? Hispanic/Latino, White, Asian, African-American/Black, Native American, Other *(enter text)*

12. What year where you born? \_\_\_\_\_ Year *(enter 4 digit year)*

13. Please select the category your TOTAL annual household income falls in. Less than \$15,000, \$15,001 to \$35,000, \$35,001 to \$75,000, \$75,001 to \$100,000, \$100,001 to \$150,000, More than \$150,000

That completes the survey. Thank you for your time.