

2010 Economic Impact Report

MidFirst Ohio Challenge Hot Air Balloon Festival

\$3.8 million to local economy

Method:

Volunteers using mechanical hand-held counting devices tabulated data from those entering the main parking gate at Middletown Regional Airport and at the walking entrance at Tytus Ave. No actual counts were taken at the other entrances: footbridge from Tytus, Wilbraham Road, Columbia Avenue, bike path or for those observing from airport hangars, the Carmody Blvd area, Forest Hills Country Club or the businesses on Hook Drive.

Based on data collected and estimates from organizers, a figure was established for each day of the event. Note that, beginning in 2009, the event changed from three days of festival with two morning flights to two days of festival with two morning flights. Totals include volunteers, vendors, performers, etc, all of whom spend money while in Middletown and on-site. Additional volunteers asked a sampling of guests where they lived and how they heard about the event.

Attendance:

	2003	2004	2005		2006	2007		2008		2009		2010	
Friday	17,550	24,000	15,730	--28%	12,113--16.5%	21,250	--29%	13,154	--22%	24,500	36%	17,299	29%
Saturday	24,855	38,500	32,650	--58%	37,980 --52%	39,150	--53%	40,099	--68%	43,325	64%	42,353	71%
Sunday	12,306	9,000	7,960	--14%	23,107--31.5%	13,400	--18%	5,844	--10%	N/A		N/A	
Totals	54,711	71,500	56,340		73,200	73,800		59,097		67,825		59,652	

People came from:

Midd/Monroe/Trenton													42%
Rest ofButler County	58%	39%	52%		43%	58%		31%		56%			16%
Warren County	16%	30%	15%		11%	12%		17%		18%			8%
Montgomery	12%	13%	6%		11%	8%		12%		6%			7%
Hamilton County	4%	4%	6%		13%	3%		2%		6%			7%
Preble County	1%	4%	6%		3%	3%		4%		2%			3%
Within 1 hour drive	91%	90%	85%		81%	84%		72%		88%			83%
Beyond 1 hour drive	9%	10%	15%		19%	16%		28%		12%			17%
Ohio	96%	98%	95%		97%	97%		88%		94%			88%
Other States	4%	2%	5%		3%	3%		12%		6%			12%

People heard about Ohio Challenge from:

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
TV	4%	7%	3%	7%	1%	11%	2%
Newspapers	42%	43%	52%	59%	36%	37%	16%
Magazines	5%	6%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Radio	33%	5%	2%	4%	2%	7%	5%
Website/Facebook/Internet	8%	6%	12%	8%	24%	20%	25%
Other	8%	33%	29%	21%	27%	3%	
Word of Mouth						25%	22%
Family Tradition						32%	33%
Vendors/Performers							5%
Signs							1%
Rack Cards							2%

Website statistics www.midfirstohiochallenge.com:

	2007	2008.....	...	2009	..	2010
Visits	14,900*	41,908.....		49,179	..	18,077*

*No figures for July – December

**January thru June only

Cox News Website Stats

	.....	2009	..	2010
Banner Ads - clicks	.....	207	..	??
Hot Topics – clicks	.....	113	..	185
User Response total	.....	320	..	??

.76% click thru rate vs the national average of .10% - 7 times the national average response on banner ad

Economic Impact 2010: \$3.8 Million

In the first two years, a 1990’s multiplier figure of \$35 per person was used to determine the economic impact on the Middletown community from events. In researching other nearby or similar events in Indiana, Michigan and other states, multipliers currently in use ranged from \$67 per person, per day for day-trippers to \$171 per day for those staying in motels. One state used an average of \$115 per person per day. Another \$104 per day. We have chosen to remain conservative but take into account inflation over the past 15 years and have raised our multiplier figure for all local events to \$65.

While no general multiplier figure will be completely accurate, it is a best estimate we can use to fairly indicate the importance of an event to the local economy. The daily multiplier rate takes into account the dollars actually spent by the guest at an event and on gasoline, retail, medical, food, motel and other direct purchases in the community as well as those dollars spent in presenting the event they attend, the jobs generated, supplies purchased, insurance arranged, taxes paid and other ripple-effect spending.

Local non-profit treasuries also grew as a result of MidFirst Ohio Challenge:

One of the results of the event is that several local non-profit organizations add much-needed dollars to their treasuries. The MidFirst Ohio Challenge organizers “hire” local non-profits for specific duties on-site. Others choose to become food/drink vendors for the weekend. Some even just add their volunteer hours to the committee effort. Our non-profit partners this year are: American Legion, Butler County Police Explorers, Falcon Lacrosse Parents, Grace Baptist Ministries, Knights of Columbus, Madison Spring Fest, Middletown High School Football Team, Middletown Police Explorers, Middletown Senior Center, Middletown Youth Soccer, Relay for Life – Monroe/Midletown, The Cure Starts Now, Trenton Cruisers Car Club.

Summary:

As usual, weather played a part in the event. Temperatures were extremely hot and humid with winds higher than balloon pilots like on Saturday. Morning and evening flights were scrapped on Saturday but balloonists did several on-ground balloon events. Friday and Saturday balloon glows and night skydiver pyro jumps served to hold the crowds on site longer.

Saturday festival hours beginning at 1 pm drew many for afternoon events such as the classic car show, corn hold tournament and kite flying. Regardless of entertainment offerings, the bulk of the crowd continued to be on site from 6-10 pm.

This being the second year using airport parking with shuttle buses worked well. Additional golf cart shuttles helped ease the strain at peak periods. More people used the shuttle to arrive on site. Back-ups at the shuttle at the end of the evening caused many to try walking. Golf carts shuttles saved the day for many families who discovered, too late, how far it was to actually walk to their cars.

The goal of MidFirst Ohio Challenge is to provide a quality event which draws guests from outside the immediate Middletown area. The aim is to break even financially each year. It is always a challenge to make income equal expenses.

Even with thousands of guests paying the \$8 parking or \$3 walk-in admission fee, there are many thousands who pay nothing to enter the grounds and/or enjoy the aerial show from afar. Free parking passes are issued to sponsors, vendors, performers, pilots/crew, volunteers, etc. A huge number of spectators watch from outside the park – Carmody Blvd, airport hangars, businesses on the opposite side of the airport grounds.

Data gathered on site and phone calls received on the event phone line before and during the event indicate audience is attracted from an expanding geographic area.

This year 83% of the surveyed guests came from within the 1-hour drive circle, with 17% driving more than an hour or staying in local hotels.

A growing number of guests are learning of the event by word of mouth, from vendors and balloon pilots speaking well of the event to their peers and from the www.MidFirstOhioChallenge.com website and other calendar, media and camera club websites listing the event.

Media coverage is also expanding. We continue to have good sponsor arrangements with Cox Newspapers (Middletown Journal) and WPFB (910 am and 105.9 fm). Cincinnati and Dayton TV and radio stations are using event releases.

We even attracted a Cincinnati-based documentary group who will use the event in their production. And, a Physics professor asked to use our media guide photos as a part of a video physics lesson.

Fifty-six sponsors and five corporate balloons supported MidFirst Ohio Challenge with their advertising dollars or in-kind services and products.
Prepared by Ann Mort based on data collected during the event by volunteers, 7/20/10.