

# Silver Sage Renaissance Festival

## Renaissance Festival 2023 Post-Festival Report

Prepared by:  
Silver Sage Renaissance Festival Governing Board  
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Come and celebrate the end of the long darkness and the beginning of a bright new day. Huzzah! Open the streets with the bustling of gentle folk. Shop keepers share their wares with the hungry patrons. Come and gather, rejoice the long summer day and celebrate the sun with friends and family kept long apart. Dance, and hug, and embrace the joy of life renewed. Savor the ale! Eat the corn and turkey legs! Enjoy the songs, the battles, and the Comedy. Come all ye fine faire folk, and celebrate the Ren Faire Way!

## **I. Introduction**

The Silver Sage Renaissance Festival is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Business Entity ID Number 9843905, registered with the state of Kansas. Its purpose is to provide a medieval-themed educational, immersive, holistic and inclusive environment for the community at large which fosters creativity and artistic expression, inspires entrepreneurship and ingenuity, while empowering a love of history. Founded in 2021, the festival began in Scott City, Kansas and was subsequently moved to Garden City, Kansas to allow for continued growth and inspire community involvement.

The 2023 Silver Sage Renaissance festival was held on June 10 and 11<sup>th</sup> in Finnup Park, Garden City, Kansas. This was the festival's third year.

## **II. Audience Metrics**

Total ticketed visitor attendance for the two day festival was set at 1950, with 1100 attending on Saturday and 850 on Sunday. Along with visitors, there were an additional 212 performers, vendors and their families, volunteers and board members. It is estimated that more than 300 people entered the festival at areas other than the main gate, or were purposeful "gate jumpers", bringing the overall visitor total to nearly 2460. The festival was attended by people of all ages, many of whom dressed in period costuming to add to the overall festival atmosphere.

## **III. Economic Impact**

Per Finney County Convention and Visitor Bureau guidelines, the overall economic impact for the county and city of Garden City was nearly \$198,000. This included 59 hotel rooms booked for out-of-town visitors, vendors, performers, volunteers and festival board members over a four day period prior, during and after the festival. This reflects a 200% increase from the previous year.

## **IV. Festival Review**

This year's festival included 47 registered vendors. Demonstration groups included the Garden City High School Drama group, Olskipan Vikings, Colorado Armored Combat, Flow Foundry Aerial Acrobats and Flint Hills Fairy. Stage and street shows were performed by the Washer Well Wenches, Irish Road Show, The Mercenary of Insults and Master Puppeteer Brett Crandall. Food vendors included Wyldewood Cellars, Shiloh Vineyard & Winery, Hidden Trail Brewery, Floyd's Smoke Shack, Mock 'n' Roll, Good Dogs Hot Dogs, Bahama Mama and Taco Gonzales.

This was a ticketed event, with ticket prices of \$5.00 in advance and \$8.00 at the gate. There was no charge for children under the age of four.

## **V. Location, Logistics and Accommodation Review**

This year's festival was held at Finnup Park, located at Finnup Drive and South Main Street in Garden City, Kansas. The park was an excellent location for the festival due to its many trees, which provided much needed shade for visitors, festival vendors and performers and helped to offset the warm temperatures. Its location within Garden City allowed visitors to easily locate the festival grounds.

Restrooms and trash disposal were included in the Finnup Park reservation and functioned without issues. Unfortunately Kansas weather changed for the worse late Saturday night and while several vendors' wares were damp Sunday morning and one vendor booth was damaged, everyone pitched in and the festival was ready for visitors at opening time.

It was recognized a number of visitors had difficulty locating the main entrance to the festival as it was located at the back of the park. Snow fencing was installed around the park to mark the festival grounds; however, it was discovered that many visitors removed the fencing to gain entrance, particularly across from the public pool area. Wrist bands were provided to those with paid admission, making it easier to identify those visitors who had not successfully located the main entrance to pay the entrance fee. This issue will be addressed for the next festival by the following:

- Adding an additional entrance gate on the opposite side of the festival and near the public pool.
- Providing additional, visible signage, particularly at the entrance gate areas.
- Adding “greeters” to engage visitors coming to the festival and direct them to the entrance gates.
- Adding additional volunteers to monitor the snow fencing to ensure it remains in place during festival hours.

#### **VI. Budget Review**

Income for the festival, including grants, donations, vendor fees and ticket sales totaled \$18,583. Expenses included park rental, performer fees, construction and building supplies, waste management and hotel accommodations which totaled \$18,031.

#### **VII. Promotion Review**

Advertising was managed through social media, including Face Book (<https://facebook.com/SilverSageRenFest>) and the festival’s website ([www.ssr-f-village.org](http://www.ssr-f-village.org)). Over 400 festival tickets were donated to several local organizations to encourage the local community to attend. In addition, Bobby Wild from radio station The Bull 100.9 and 94.7 conducted a live interview with festival president Jacque Swartout prior to the festival. He also attended the first day of the festival and live streamed on his Facebook page for the benefit of his many followers.

A media director was selected after the festival to begin planning a significantly expanded social media presence to advertise for next year’s festival, which will include Instagram and TikTok. Marketing plans will be developed over the next few months.

Festival members will also be attending a number of events throughout the next few months, including Food Truck Fridays and Fall Fest in Garden City, Whimydiddle in Scott City and Great Plains Renaissance Festival in Wichita, to promote the festival and enlighten the community and potential vendors of the festival’s benefits. Newly designed flyers will be distributed as an additional marketing tool. It is anticipated vendors who attended this year’s festival will also provide “word of mouth” advertising to other vendors at festivals they will attend in the future.

#### **VIII. Sponsorships**

The Silver Sage Renaissance Festival governing board would like to extend their appreciation and gratitude to the sponsors of this year’s festival, whose generous support made the festival possible.

- Finney County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Western Kansas Community Foundation
- City of Garden City
- Builders FirstSource of Garden City
- Snowman’s Feed & Livestock of Garden City
- Applebees of Garden City and Wichita

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