

2026 Ice Fest Recap



Jan.29

Feb.01



2026

Event Recap

- ❄️ 4 days of events planned across all 5 towns.
- ❄️ 66 Participating Partners in 2026 vs. 55 Partners in 2025
- ❄️ Several events sold out in advance.
- ❄️ Advance ticket sales for Ice Extravaganza pacing 30% ahead of 2025, sold across broader geographic reach from Ohio to Florida.
- ❄️ Lodging Packages – 6x more lodging pre-bookings over 2025
- ❄️ Collaboration with partners to provide last minute, additional support to mitigate cold weather concerns.





Weather Impact

- 19 Vendors pre-cancelled and/or concerned about travel & extreme conditions
- Extreme cold will damage warming tent & bounce house
- Ice Extravaganza refund requests
- Lodging cancellations
- Extreme Cold Warning
- Winter Storm Warning
- State of Emergency
- Travel warning - NCDOT

Making it Work

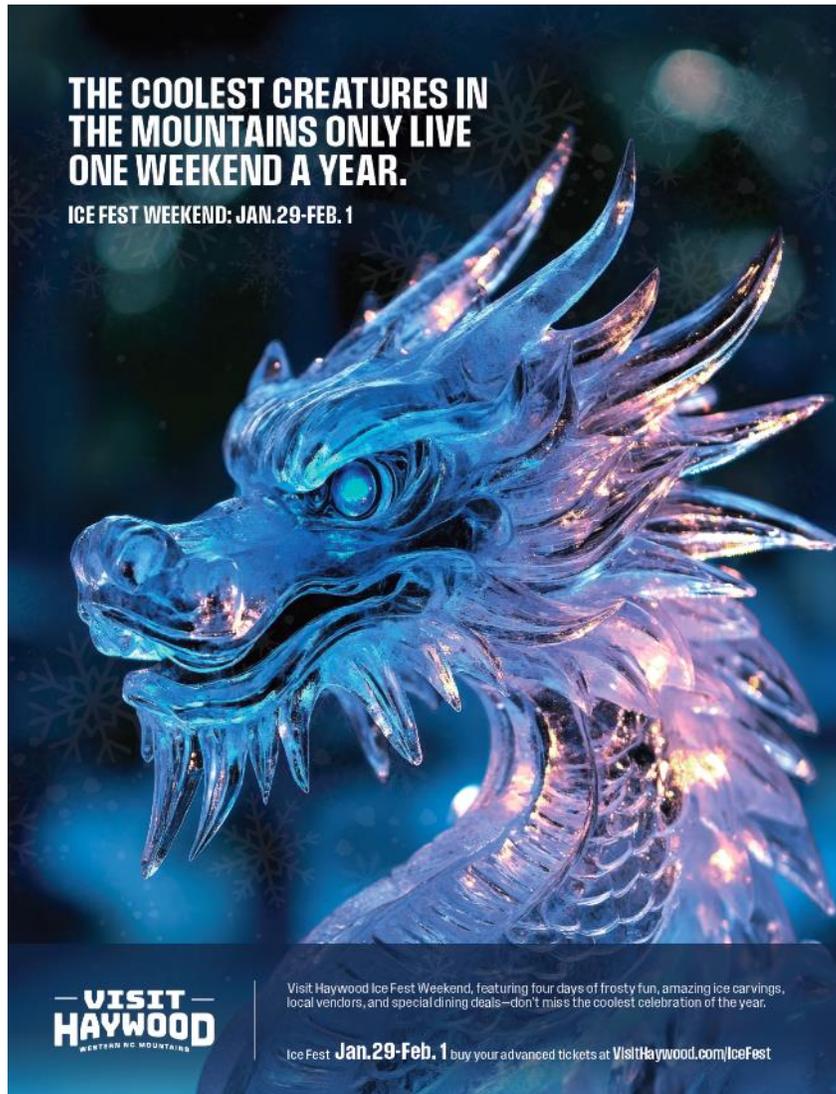




User Generated Photos



Advertising Recap



- 2nd most visited page on website behind home page.
- 1st most visited in Unique views

- 140,402 Page views
 - 134% increase from 2025
- 90,311 Unique views
 - 111% increase from 2025



Advertising

- Meta Ads (Facebook, Instagram)
- Our State
- GVL Today
- Datafy
- Visit NC (Featured Event & Social Promotion)
- Newsletters
- The Mountaineer
- The Biltmore Beacon
- Smoky Mountain News



THE COOLEST CREATURES ONLY LIVE FOR ONE WEEKEND A YEAR.

JAN. 29 – FEB. 1
Canton | Clyde | Lake Junaluska | Maggie Valley | Waynesville



4 DAYS OF FROSTY FUN
Jan. 29 - Feb. 1

LEARN MORE

MAGGIE VALLEY • WAYNESVILLE • LAKE JUNALUSKA • CANTON • CLYDE



THE COOLEST CREATURES ONLY LIVE FOR ONE WEEKEND A YEAR.



JAN. 29 - FEB. 1

BUY YOUR TICKETS

2025 Total Visitor Impact

138

Jobs Supported

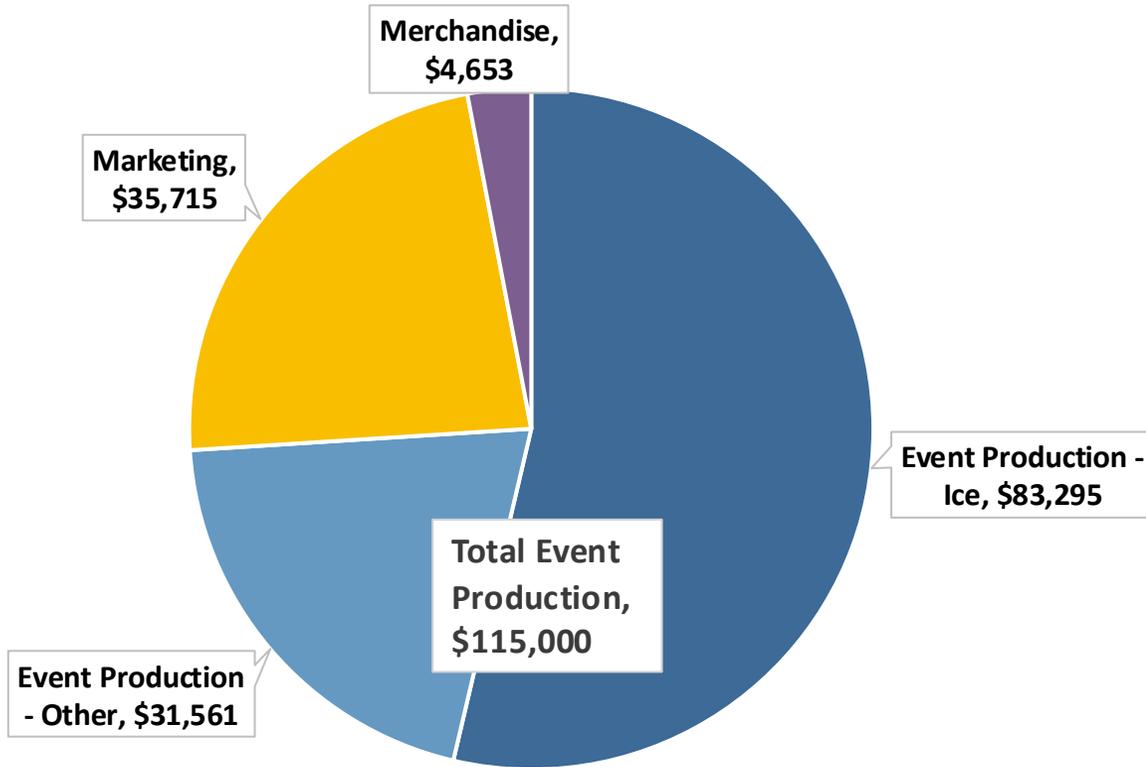
Local Taxes

\$18,286

Business Sales
\$566,086

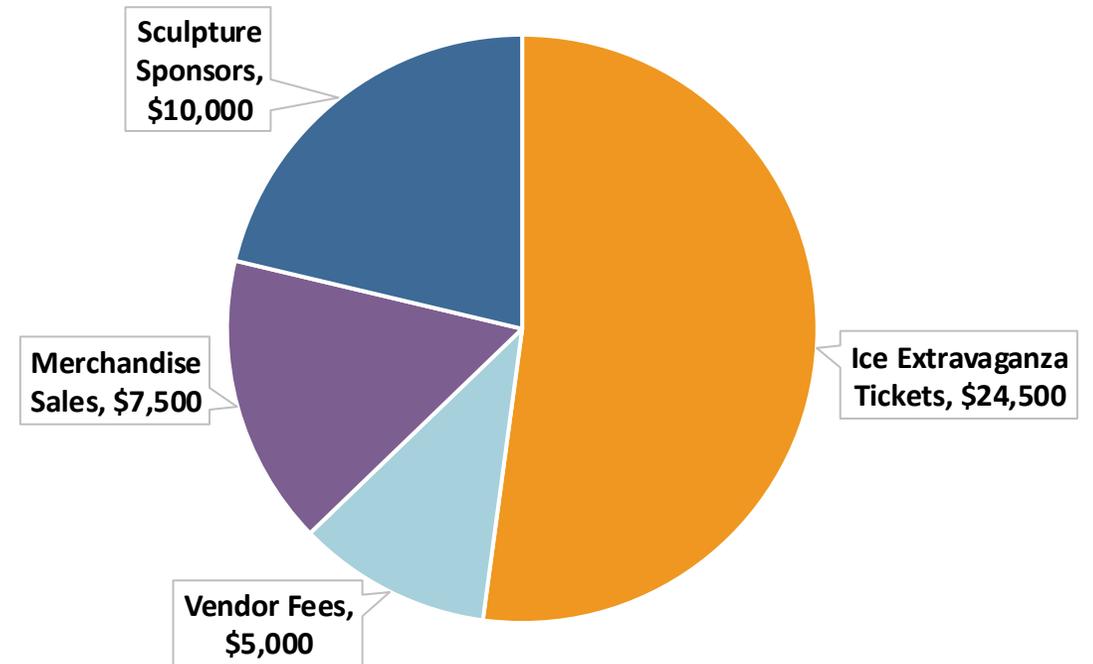
Estimated Expenses: \$155,000*

**Minor refunds/expenses in March*



Projected Revenues: \$47,000*

Assumes a 20% increase in ticket sales YOY

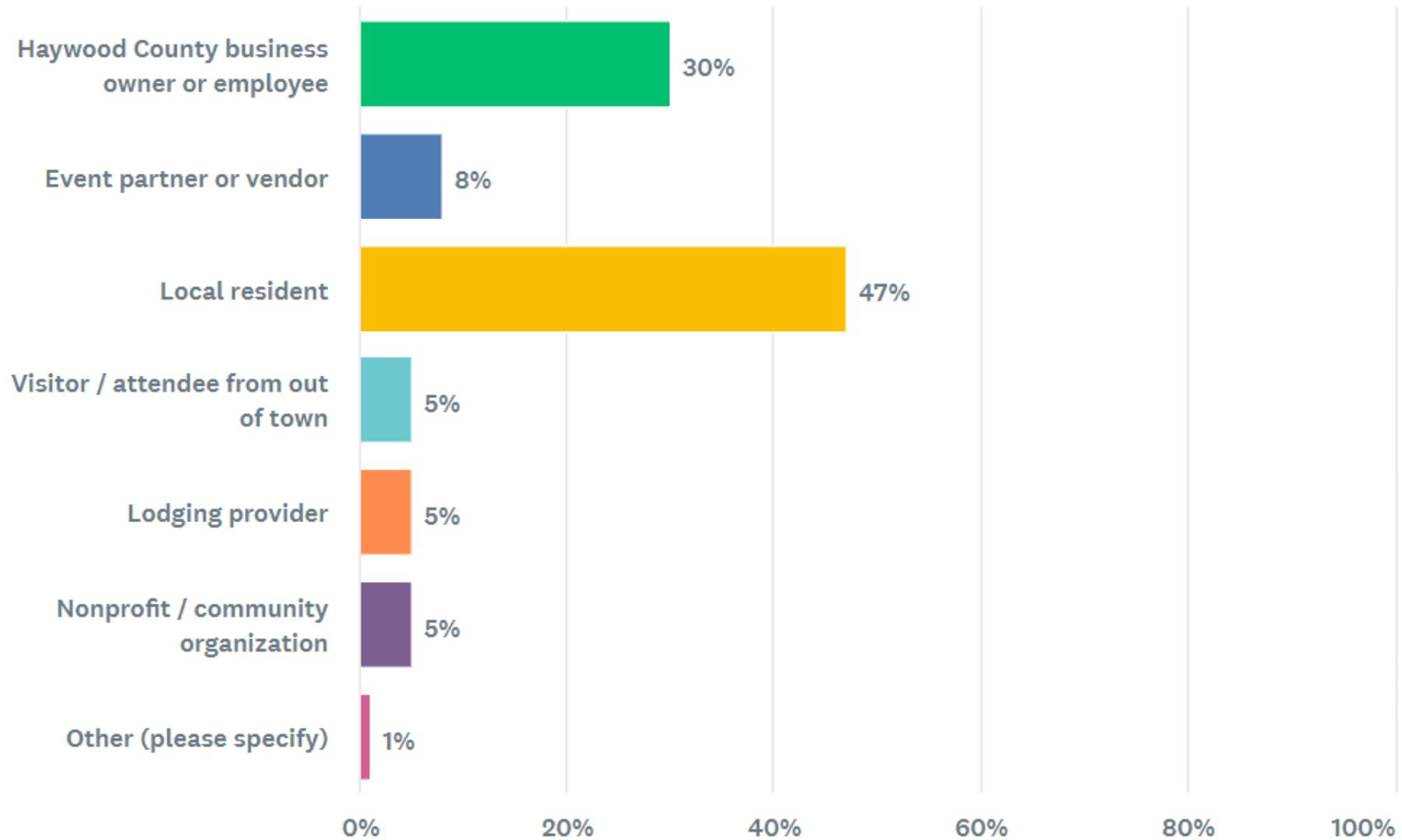


Actual Revenues

Ice Extravaganza Tickets	\$0
Vendor Fees	\$100
Merchandise Sales	\$500
Sculpture Sponsors	\$10,000
Total	\$10,600



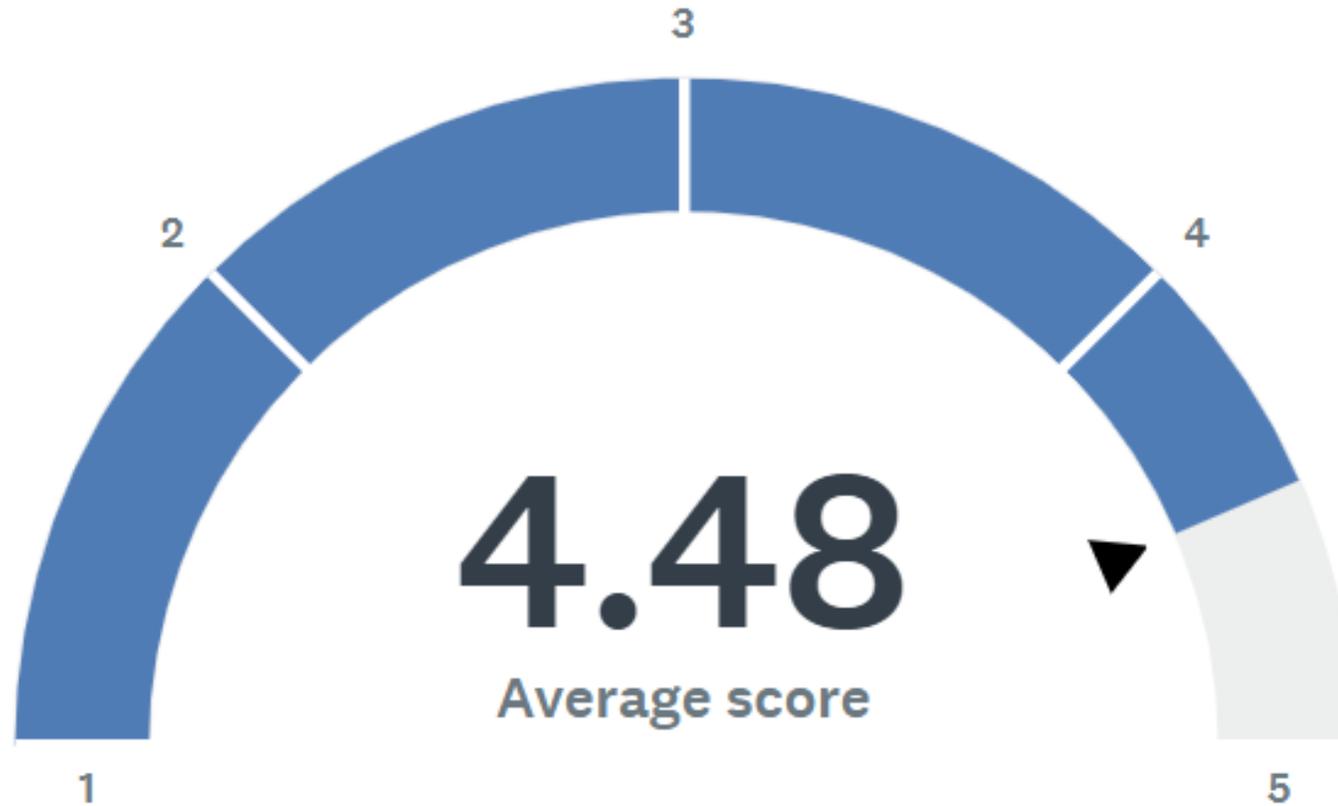
2026 Expenses & Revenues



How were you involved in Ice Fest Weekend 2026? Select the most relevant answer.

Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses

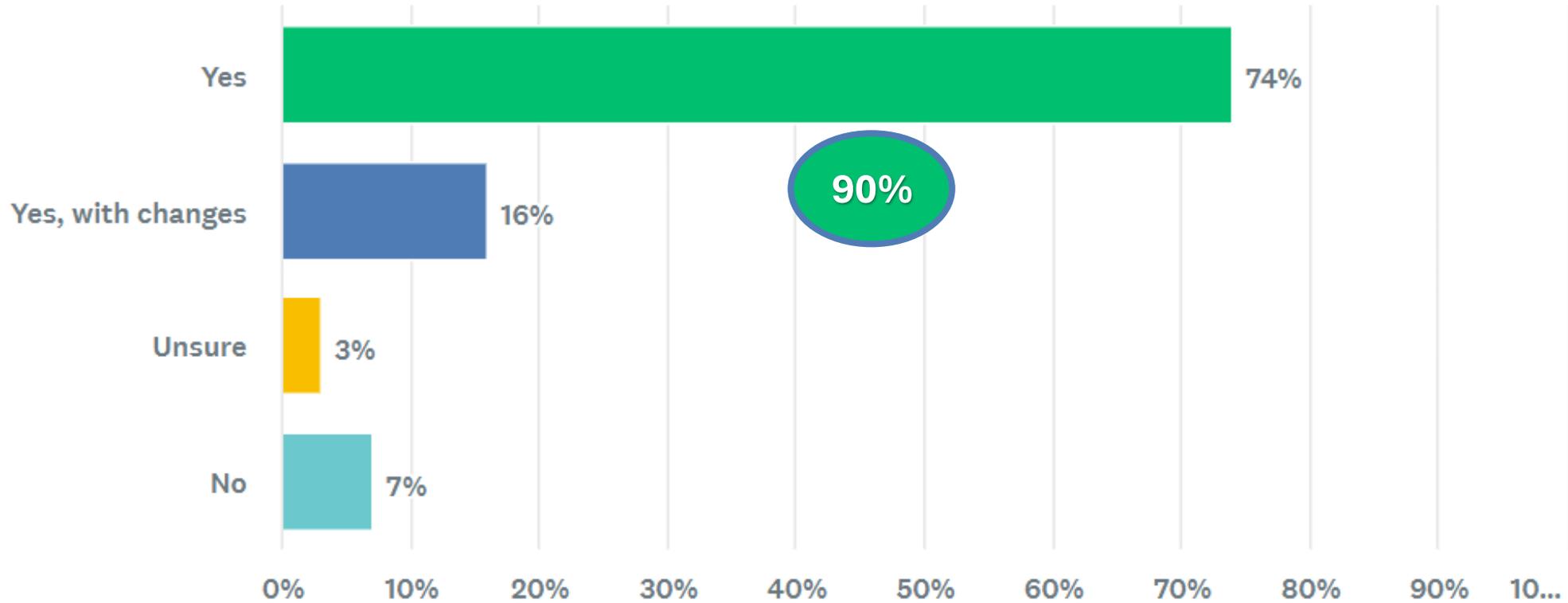




With 1 being not important at all and 5 being extremely important, how important do you feel Ice Fest Weekend is to supporting Haywood County during the winter season?

Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses

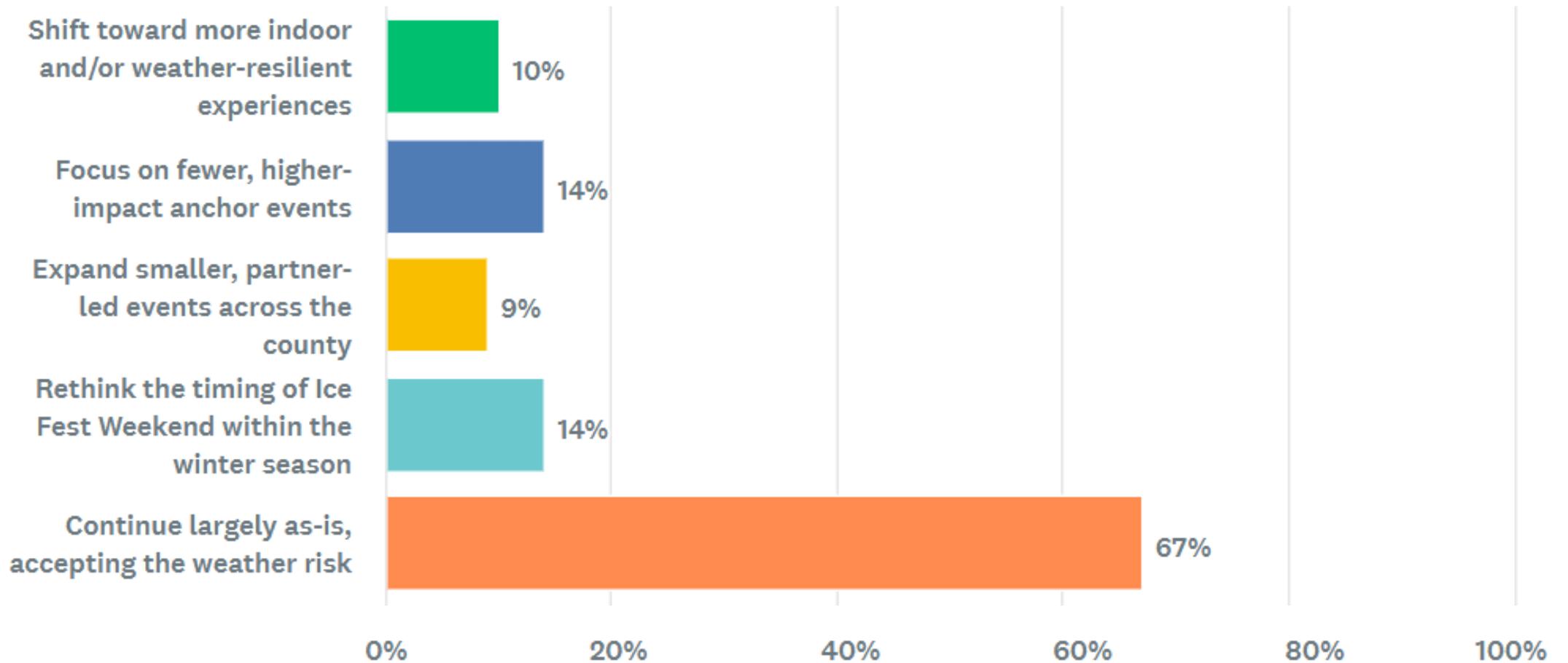




Would you support Ice Fest continuing even if weather disruptions remain a possibility?

Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses





*Looking ahead, which overall direction do you think Ice Fest Weekend should move in?
Select all that apply.*

Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses



DATES/TIMING

Adjust timing of the event within winter (earlier, later, modify specific start times).

Consider expanding beyond a single weekend format.

FINANCIAL

Increase ROI by investing in longer-lasting, weatherproof event features.

Maintain affordability and a family-friendly focus.

GENERAL/OVERALL COMMENTS

Overall feedback was very positive, with many respondents describing Ice Fest as well planned, well executed, and the best version yet, encouraging organizers to continue the event while building on its unique ice-focused elements.

EVENT ELEMENTS

Keep activities concentrated in a walkable downtown setting:

Many respondents preferred centralized downtown events (especially Waynesville) over dispersed locations or the festival grounds.

Expand interactive elements and entertainment:

Requests included more vendors, performers, musicians, and activities for families.

Retain and expand popular features:

Warming stations, fire pits, and courthouse ice sculptures were frequently praised and recommended to continue.

OPEN-ENDED SUMMARY: What is the single most important improvement or change you would recommend as we plan for 2027?

Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses



Planning for 2027



Innovative Ideas for 2027



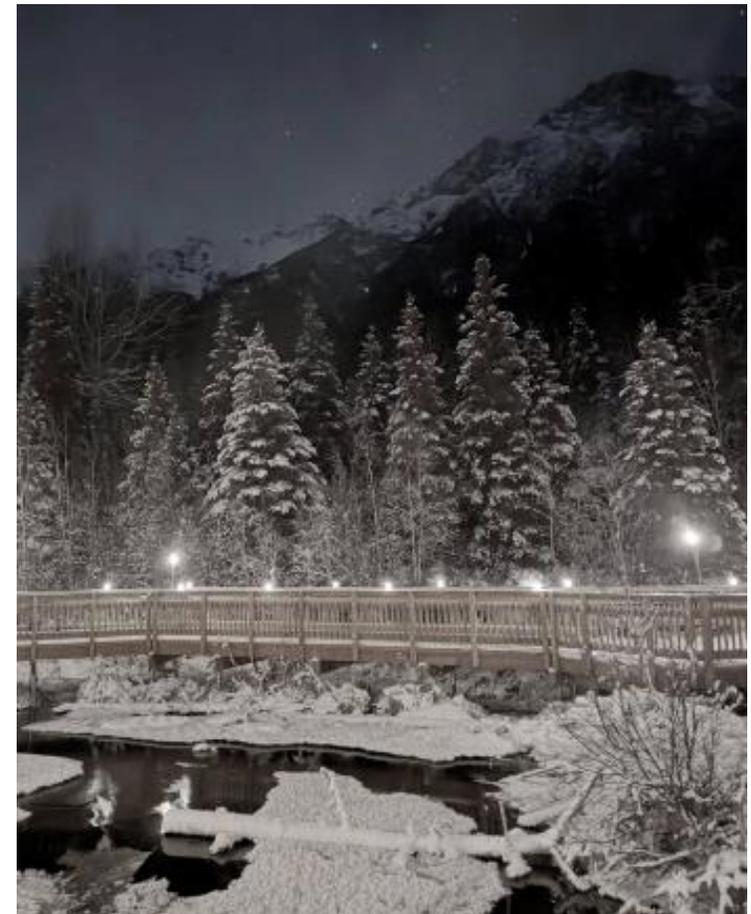
Canton: "Anything But Snow"
Snowman Contest



Maggie Valley: Life-Sized
Snow Globe Trail



Clyde: Ice Lantern Trail



Innovative Ideas for 2027



Lake Junaluska: Ice
Light Garden



Waynesville: Ice Block Party on
Saturday with slightly extended hours



2027 Ice Fest Weekend: January 28-31, 2027

Requesting approval to spend up to \$155,000 on event production, advertising, and other expenses for FY 26/27



2027 Ice Festival Preliminary Budget

