



Riverboat Days 2019 Stats and Facts

Summary:

- The 2019 program featured 46 events over ten days. This is a decrease in event numbers from previous years, partly attributable to not having a Terrace and District Arts Council Summer Arts Festival this year with its many workshops and luncheon lectures.
- Weather was good throughout the ten days. Anecdotally crowds were again strong at key events such as the Legion Parade and Concerts in the Park. A crowd count was undertaken for Movie in the Park attendance. For the 4th consecutive year numbers have increased. The 2019 attendance was in excess of 900 people.
- Sports featured strongly in the 2019 program. Significant out of town participation was experienced in events such as soccer, slo-pitch, street hockey and auto racing. 2019 was a first year for a Riverboat Days basketball tournament and for a fitness challenge.
- For 2019, the Terrace Riverboat Days Society launched a new website (riverboatdays.info) and an Instagram site. The Riverboat Days official Facebook page was used much more than in previous years as a tool to promote Riverboat Days.

Events:

All 2019 registered events were held according to schedule; there were no cancellations. New events included a 3 day basketball tournament held at Caledonia School and within the Sportsplex Main Arena--using a modular floor, a fitness challenge at MaXXed Out Fitness Centre and a Block Party in the 4600 block of Lazelle Avenue. The last replaced the Street Medley event previously held on Lakelse Avenue. The popular Kitsumkalum Salmon Barbecue, challenged in recent years with low salmon returns to the Skeena watershed, returned in 2019 and was well attended. The YVC Soapbox Derby, initiated last year, moved to a new location on the Park Avenue Hill, producing more thrilling rides.

A different approach was used this year in choosing performers for Concerts in the Park. Northwest bands were still represented well in the line up, then four headliners capped off the day. Concerts normally has a rock music focus. This year one of the headliners was rising country rock star Brock Andrews from Saskatchewan. And instead of selecting a band with name recognition and longevity, the other three 2019 headliners lacked the profile but nevertheless were very capable bands from the Okanagan, collectively operating under a *Rockanagan* banner. A change in format did not appear to affect attendance through the day at George Little Park.

Riverboat Days Promotions:

Advertising strategy largely copied previous years, with the exception of a fresh approach regarding social media and website presence. Other than some print ads in regional tourism publications (e.g., Kermoder Tourism Guide, Northwords), Riverboat Days advertising does not begin in earnest till after July 1. This minimizes “noise” in the media while other community festivals (e.g., Canada Day celebrations in Terrace and Kitimat) are trying to draw attention to themselves.

Components of the Riverboat Days 2019 advertising:

- approximately 60 Riverboat Days 2019 posters were printed, mostly distributed in Terrace and Thornhill with help of Volunteer Terrace's Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC). A unique "Sports at Riverboat Days 2019" poster was also created. Both posters were placed on social media.
- a print run of 6000 of the Official Program/Booklet, produced by Black Press, and distributed through retail outlets and gathering places free of charge in the Terrace area.
- The City of Terrace again placed Riverboat Days banners on the lampposts along the Highway 16 bridges. The Society placed its 4' x 8' street sign along H16 across from the Visitor Centre.
- radio campaigns on Bell Media and CFNR. With Bell Media the Riverboat Days Society undertook its 4th "Big Bang Contest" with the winner lighting the black powder cannon which marks the opening of Riverboat Days. Radio is also used to communicate important messages such as road closures for events such as the Fireworks.
- The website (www.riverboatdays.ca) is a comprehensive repository of information about Riverboat Days. The website hosts Event Schedules, registration forms, venue maps and other planning resources for those considering attending Riverboat Days. It also has information about the Society, sponsorship information and a section on the history of sternwheeler traffic on the Skeena River.
- In July, the Riverboat Days Society "went live" with a second website: riverboatdays.info. Instead of undertaking a substantial rebuild of riverboatdays.ca, the new website was created to function better on mobile devices, be much simpler to navigate than the main website and project a refreshed online appearance of Riverboat Days. In effect, riverboatdays.info acts as a new homepage for Riverboat Days, linking to riverboatdays.ca where necessary to access more detailed information such as event schedules and maps. Over time riverboatdays.info is expected to supersede riverboatdays.ca as the Riverboat Days website.
- For 2019 the Riverboat Days Facebook page was used much more extensively. It is especially useful as a vehicle for communicating last minute information and for linking to Riverboat Days event hosts Facebook pages. In addition, Riverboat Days commenced an Instagram page in 2019.

Website Statistics (riverboatdays.ca): (July 1 through August 11)

Website traffic patterns have been very consistent over the years. There is minimal traffic during the "off season," then gradual increase beginning in the early spring (summer holiday planning?), then more significant traffic rising through July and a massive surge approaching and during the August long weekend. Website traffic declines substantially after this first weekend.

2018 was a record year for Riverboat Days website traffic. Website visits were down in 2019, returning to 2016/2017 levels. Yet Facebook traffic looks much higher and some traffic will have diverted to riverboatdays.info.

The first comprehensive Riverboat Days events schedule generally is posted on the website in the first week of July (and revised as required). Therefore, most of our focus in monitoring website traffic is for the period commencing July 1 through the end of that year's Riverboat Days. (The end date varies year to year.)

For 2019, the website received an average of 326 “Sessions” per day, a total of 13,700 Sessions and a peak on Saturday, August 3 of 2025 Sessions. This compares with 2018 (480 Sessions/Day; peak of 2760 Session). 2017 (355 Sessions/Day; peak of 1985 Sessions) and 2016 (377 Sessions/Day and peak of 2495 Sessions).

Though less than 2017 (6745 downloads) and 2018 numbers, the 2019 Events Schedule was still downloaded from the website 5175 times. Combined with the 6000 printed official programs and events schedules appearing in the weekly newspaper, this is very high saturation in a community of fewer than 20,000 people.

Other downloads which drew traffic were the Concerts in the Park schedule at 236 downloads and an advisory on attending the Fireworks (with 327 downloads). Single day one page schedules for the four days of the long weekend were also received well. The Saturday, August 3 schedule was the 2nd most downloaded file from riverboatdays.ca with 454 downloads. These single day schedules, fireworks notice and Concerts schedule were also available through riverboatdays.info and on the Facebook and Instagram pages.

Website Statistics (riverboatdays.info):

The riverboatdays.info website was launched in mid July. At this late date, the opportunities to promote the new website were limited and therefore no expectations were placed on traffic volumes. A key message tried to be communicated in that short time was for mobile users to use riverboatdays.info as the better platform. July visits were just over 250 and for the first half of August, 300.

Riverboat Days Facebook Page:

The Facebook page was used very well in 2019 for communicating developments and late breaking news about RBDs 2019, and for postings on our page by individual event organizers. Of the last, this included posting of slo-pitch and soccer event schedules, soapbox derby promotions and nearly daily happenings with the Salmon Arts Festival. In 2018 the Riverboat Days Facebook page had 530 “followers.” This has nearly doubled to 1046 followers.

Instagram Page:

The Instagram page quietly went live early in 2019. It is hoped this page will be a main vehicle for hosting images and video of Riverboat Days. With the close of Riverboat Days 2019 the Instagram page has 178 followers and 65 following.

Fundraising/Sponsorships:

Supplementing the core funding of \$10,500 received from the City of Terrace (and Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine), in 2019 the Riverboat Society received \$11,775 in additional sponsorships. Large grants include those from the Northern Development Initiative Trust (\$2500) and LNG Canada (\$3500). These contributions are acknowledged in various ways as major sponsorships (e.g., on RBD poster, website and official program).

Society members also solicit locally for sponsorships for the Fireworks and Movie on the Park events. For the Fireworks 2019, 6 sponsors provided approximately \$2500 additional dollars to the event. For the Movie in the Park, 12 sponsors provided approximately \$2800.

Event Attendance:

Most events at Riverboat Days are free of charge and not ticketed. Therefore, crowd counts are difficult to undertake and are at best estimates. Readers are advised to view on the Riverboat Days website the *2017 Audience Estimates and Quick Facts*, which contain good quality crowd estimates gathered with the assistance of the Youth Volunteer Corps of the Terrace Volunteer Bureau.

For 2019, the only event the Riverboat Days Society performed a crowd count on was the Movie in the Park. This was its 4th year in the Riverboat Days program and it has grown its audience each year.

Movie in the Park:

The outdoor Movie in the Park is held at dusk around 10 pm on the Wednesday evening. It is organized by the City of Terrace Recreation Department, supported by the Terrace Riverboat Days Society and private sponsors. A key objective of the Riverboat Days Society in recent years has been to build up the mid week program. The outdoor movie proved popular from the start. And to augment its popularity, additional activities such as a bouncy castle and “nerf gun battles” are held during the day and early evening prior to the movie start.

The method for counting the Movie crowd has been quite consistent for the four years of the event. A member of the Terrace Riverboat Days Society using a clicker/counter walks through the crowd prior to the film start. Due to impending darkness the count must be undertaken swiftly and then a visual inspection of the crowd made later to account for late arrivals. For the 10 pm movie start, the crowd count takes place between 9:45 pm and 9:55 pm. The recorded number for 2019 was 918. As other people will drift into the event after the count, a reliable crowd estimate for 2019 is 920 to 1000.

Year by Year Comparison:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Weather Conditions</u>	<u>Crowd Estimate</u>
2019	excellent warm weather	920-1000
2018	fine but dropping temperatures	800-900
2017	excellent weather	700-800
2016	marginal weather	300-400

One final, unconventional statistic about the 2019 Movie in the Park is that Tillicum Twin Theatres donated 400 bags of popcorn to the event. All were gathered up before the Movie even started!

Terrace Riverboat Days Society
September 12, 2019